

Summer 2009

The Lived Experiences of Evangelical Christian Men Who Self-Identify as Sexual Addicts

Kailla Edger

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THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN MEN WHO SELF-
IDENTIFY AS SEXUAL ADDICTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Kailla Edger

August 2009

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Kailla Edger

2009

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Department of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Executive Counselor Education and Supervision Program

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May 4, 2009

THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN MEN WHO
SELF-IDENTIFY AS SEXUAL ADDICTS

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ABSTRACT

THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN MEN WHO SELF-IDENTIFY AS SEXUAL ADDICTS

By

Kailla Edger

August 2009

Dissertation supervised by David Delmonico

Issues of sexual addiction have swept the evangelical movement, and ongoing concerns in the evangelical community are evidenced by its self-help literature, men's movements, and sex manuals. The purpose of this investigation was to examine the lived experiences of evangelical Christian men who self-identify as sexual addicts. This qualitative method was existential-phenomenological and focused on the lived experiences of this population. Individual interviews and follow-up individual interviews of six self-identified evangelical male sexual addicts were analyzed. The results of the study indicated that the male evangelical self-identified sexual addict lives through compartmentalized worlds: the religious or spiritual world, the committed relationship or marital world, and the sexual world. Only through the forced convergence of these spaces due to exposure along with the risk of extreme consequences do self-identified evangelical men surrender to change. After surrendering to change, subjects willingly

grasp on to the concept of sexual addiction as they identify with others in the Christian recovering community and with Christian literature. Sexual addiction becomes an identity that gives them a sense of relief, and a growing dependence on a recovery program emerges along with a necessary and renewed reliance, appreciation, and understanding of God. The findings of this investigation illuminate the need for counselors to recognize the inextricable link between evangelicals and their relationship with God as they counsel the evangelical Christian male who struggles with sexual behaviors.

I never encounter anything except my responsibility.

- Sartre (1943/1984, p. 710)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the six research participants who shared their intimate life-stories with me, stories that were often difficult to tell. Without their openness and dedication to this project, none of this would have been possible, and so I immensely thank them for entrusting me with their personal stories. I felt a personal connection with each one, and I will forever be in their debt.

I owe my greatest thanks to my chair, Dr. David Delmonico, whose encouragement and rigorous direction have truly shaped me as a scholar. His exceptional reviews on the content and layout of this dissertation have greatly contributed to its successful completion. His clarity of mind and attention to detail helped me illuminate abstract concepts into concrete descriptions, and because of him, I am now a better writer. In addition, he has been a great source of professional support, and I am incredibly grateful to him for the many opportunities he has provided for collaboration on different projects in an effort to help me grow professionally. I want to also thank Dr. John Massella for not only being my committee member but for also being a genuine source of support for me during many stressful personal times throughout my studies. Thank you to Dr. Jocelyn Gregoire for his careful reading of the material and for his attention to detail. His rigorous critiques were truly appreciated and contributed greatly to a much improved finished work. I would like also like to thank my father, Adam Drozdek, who not only supported me as a daughter but challenged me as a scholar. His reviews of my dissertation have been invaluable to me, and our many conversations about my research have helped me develop even more as a critical thinker. Thank you!

It has been a great blessing to have the unwavering support of my husband, Bryan Edger. His continued encouragement and patience throughout this process have been sustaining examples of his love for me, and I cannot thank him enough for being a wonderful partner and friend. Thank you to my mother, Bogna Drozdek, and my sister, Justyna Drozdek for their genuine interest in my work and their consistent faith in my ability to succeed. Thank you to my cohort members who have supported me in countless ways. I really feel like we became a family through this process, and I will always be grateful for that. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the friendship of Anthony Boone who has continued to be a great source of emotional support for me from the very first day, a truly great friend and confidant. His friendship has helped me through many trying times and has also brought me much joy, and I am grateful to have him in my life.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Importance of the Study

Minimal information exists in research about the specific needs of evangelical Christian men who identify as sexual addicts. Evangelicalism contains an assortment of belief systems, and different evangelical denominations range anywhere from having strong conservative views to maintaining more liberal stances (Knitter, 1985). Despite converging differences, (a) all evangelical Christians believe in the Bible as the absolute word of God, (b) Jesus Christ as God incarnate and savior of sinful humanity, (c) the lordship of the Holy Spirit, (d) the need for personal conversion, and (e) the duty to spread the gospel (McGrath, 1995). Among all denominations of evangelicals, the conservative evangelical movement has been the most familiar and dominant. Some present and past conservative evangelists include Billy Graham, Pat Robertson, Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, and Ted Haggard. Evangelical men's movements, which are often groups and organizations designed to help evangelical men deal with sexuality and relationship issues, are vast, and most are conservative in nature. Promise Keepers, a conservative evangelical organization that focuses on helping men keep their promises to their families by concentrating on men's responsibilities to be leaders in their families (Clatterbaugh, 2000), is one of the largest evangelical men's movements that incorporates interventions for sexual addictive behaviors (Bartkowski, 2003). From 1990 to 2008, Promise Keepers has had five and a half million men involved in its organization (Promise Keepers, 2008a).

The purpose of this investigation was to examine the lived experiences of evangelical Christian men who self-identify as sexual addicts. Three primary issues concerning evangelical men who struggle with sexual addiction influenced this study: (a) Evangelical self-help literature and sexual purity groups continue to multiply, presuming the ubiquity of sexual compulsivity and addiction among evangelical men. (b) The more conservative evangelical stance concerning sexuality may be increasingly at odds with a growing liberal sexual stance in the general population. (c) Confusion and distress of self-proclaimed evangelical sexual addicts could be affected by the growing popularization of the vague main-stream concept of sexual addiction and the evangelical idea of sexual purity.

Christian men devote more time examining their masculinity than most other groups of men (Singleton, 2004). The “Christian Men’s Movement, reached its zenith in the 1990s,” (Singleton, p. 153) as Christians cultivated an increased number of men’s sexual self-help literature and sexual purity organizations such as Promise Keepers (Singleton). Organizations like Men’s Life, The Gathering, The Master’s Men, Man’s Authentic Nature, and Every Man’s Battle are all conservative evangelical men’s movements, and most Christian’s men’s self-help literature that is produced is written by and for evangelical Christians (Donovan, 1998; Singleton).

Much of evangelicals’ conservative views about sexuality seem to continue to go unchanged despite the growing liberality in the general public. With an explosion of evangelical literature about sexual purity paralleled with the increased popularity of the concept of sexual addiction, many evangelical Christians speculate that their unwelcome sexual desires are a result of sexual addiction (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell, 2007). Peele

(2000) speculated that many individuals may think they are addicted because they equate their behavior with addiction (as cited in Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell). Several evangelical students considered themselves to be sexually addicted because they wanted to give good reason for their efforts to cease masturbating; an act that they believed was sinful (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell).

In order to understand the implications of sexual addiction of evangelicals, it should be appreciated that many evangelicals may have a unique conception of psychological problems. For numerous evangelicals, psychological problems are understood to be rooted in a “sinful and spiritually fallen condition” (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell, 2007, p. 4). The various insights of many evangelicals are discussed in evangelical self-help literature though traditional literature, but scholarly research falls short in this domain. Counselors who are not familiar with evangelicalism or have not worked with many evangelical individuals may not be aware of the unique viewpoints and diverse culture of the evangelical population. Through thorough assessments of both the nature as well as the severity of evangelical men’s sexual issues, counselors may better address many of the specific needs of evangelical individuals that struggle with.

Defining the exact nature of sexual addiction continues to be debated, but most theorists agree that sexual addiction is both progressive and cyclical. Because there are higher levels of symptoms that become problematic among self-identified sexual addicts as compared to other groups of people, the proposition that this pattern of sexual behavior encompasses a disorder is evident. Therefore, underscoring this pattern does not merely aim to pathologize a sexual lifestyle that may be culturally disapproved (Gold & Heffner, 1998). This qualitative investigation is specific to evangelical Christian men who identify

as sexual addicts and is aimed at focusing on these men's lived experiences of sexual addiction through their evangelical perspectives. This research will provide counselors and other helping professionals with a better understanding of this diverse population, which will better equip helping professionals in counseling the sexually-addicted evangelical male.

Statement of the Problem

Sexual shame, a negative mood state, was found to create anxiety and discourage healthy sexual activity (Long, Cate, Fehsenfeld, & Williams 1996; Sac, Keller, & Hinkle, 1984 as cited in Else-Quest, Shibley, & DeLamater, 2005), and church doctrine has been blamed, at least in some cases, for being a contributing factor in producing shame and guilt in its church members (Nelson, 2003). Men who experienced gender role conflict in relation to expressing emotions tended to have higher levels of shame (Thompkins & Rando, 2003), and men who portrayed more masculine roles preferred to deal with their shame and guilt through action-oriented responses rather than verbally (Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005). Evangelical men are often portrayed in more masculine roles yet may experience gender role conflict since they are often expected to be the head of their house while the instruction on how they should engage with their families in the leadership role is continually disputed.

The continual expansion and production of evangelical men's movements, evangelical self-help literature, and Christian and evangelical treatment programs catered to the sexually-addicted male suggests that there are problematic sexual issues in this population that may be increasing. Sexual indiscretions among evangelicals is further strengthened by ongoing sex scandals of many leading men of the evangelical movement:

the alleged affair of televangelist Marvin Gorman with a congregation member in 1986 (Gamson, 2001; Seaman, 1999), exposure of televangelist Jim Bakker's infidelity, also in 1986 (Seaman, 1999), televangelist Jimmy Swaggart's sexual encounters with a prostitute made public in 1988 (Gamson; Seaman), evangelist, comedian, and self-proclaimed former satanist, Mike Warnke's affairs uncovered in 1991 (Shupe, 1995), Assemblies of God pastor Frank Houston's confession in 2000 about past sexual activities with a teenage boy (Prasch, 2008), former president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) Ted Haggard's affair with a male prostitute exposed in 2006 (Gallagher, 2006), Paul Barnes's confession and resignation due to homosexual acts similar to Haggard's in 2006 (Gorski, 2008), and Assemblies of God general superintendant Wayne Hughe's charge of sexual activity with a teenager in 2007 (Prasch). Such stories have continued to fuel controversy about the evangelical movement, and many of these sex scandals have inaccurately painted the evangelical movement as the quintessential hypocritical organization (Gamson). From the limited reports of the media, none of these men volunteered the information until they were discovered. One assumption is that evangelicalism is a practice that outlines clear behavioral standards often based on literal Biblical interpretations and shuns immoral sexual behavior, encouraging secretiveness of offending parties. The combination of immoral sexuality, secretiveness, and shame, intertwined with a stringent religious moral code, may lead many men to live parallel lives until psychological tolls escalate to unmanageable proportions (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell, 2007).

It has been argued that some formal sexual addiction assessment instruments may not be helpful in assessing evangelicals because of the instruments' vague terminology

and the vulnerability to subjective interpretations (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell, 2007). The instruments' uses of targeted questions could reduce generalizability to evangelical subpopulations, and the assumptions of partnered sexual activities could ignore a vast population of evangelicals that view masturbation and pornography as immoral (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell, 2007). It has also been argued that personal evangelical values coupled with possibly irrelevant idiopathic variables in assessing sexual addiction may present evangelical men with an invalid self-identification of sex addiction (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell, 2007). In the secular realm, the effectiveness of sexual addiction assessment instruments has also continued to be debated. A qualitative study as this may help illuminate specific issues of evangelicals that are separate from the secular population, adding rich information for future test development.

The limited evangelical applicability of current sex research and the potential problems it can create in the evangelical sex addicted population demands further exploration of evangelical male sexual addiction. This qualitative investigation was well suited for exploring and identifying the specific issues of evangelical sexually addicted men because interviews provided deeper insights into the intricate interactions of evangelical men's experiences.

Significance of the Study

Theoretical evangelical investigations regarding clerical sexual offenses, sexual purity organizations, self-help literature, sex manuals, and other sexual issues are abundant in the literature, but empirical investigations exploring the lived world of sexually addicted evangelical men were not found. Despite the proliferation of evangelical interventions for sexual addiction, none have been treated with critical

scrutiny or evaluated for efficacy and impact on Christian sexual identity formation. The purpose of this investigation was to examine the lived experiences of evangelical Christian men who self-identified as sexual addicts. This research aimed to shed light on the sexual practices and possible sexual pathologies of evangelical men, an action that will fill the requirement for evangelical research to move beyond anecdotal discussion and approach the problem of identification of genuine needs more systematically (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell, 2007). Additionally, this research was significant because it generated new hypotheses about sexual addiction in the evangelical male population, raising informed questions for future research. This qualitative approach was specific to gaining deeper knowledge of this under-studied phenomenon while identifying other inquiries demanding further attention.

Rationale

The rationale for this research centers on three conditions: (a) Historically, the main-stream research has not addressed evangelical sexual issues, perhaps due to cultural sensitivity or a stigma that may be associated with sex in religion. (b) Research is significantly limited with regard to understanding the phenomenon of evangelical men who identify as sexual addicts. (c) With the limitation of current research in the area of evangelical faith and sexual addiction, helpful therapeutic interventions for evangelical men struggling with sexual addiction have not been explored in the secular population because knowledge about the lived experiences of this population has been lacking.

Much of the evangelical population is misunderstood and, at times, condemned by the main-stream culture. Researchers that investigated the secular attitudes of individuals about evangelical students on college campuses unanimously found that evangelical

students faced significant disdain and intolerance in the schools' social environments (Lowery, 2001; Hulett, 2004; Bryant, 2005; Schulz, 2005; Moran, Lang, & Oliver, 2007).

A better understanding of evangelicals' values, beliefs, and behaviors may decrease stereotypes and assumptions concerning evangelicals. A better understanding of this population in general could significantly aid the development of even more appropriate therapeutic interventions for evangelicals dealing with sexual issues.

There is a limited amount of research dedicated to adult evangelical men who struggle with sexual addiction issues. Sexuality studies that specifically illuminate various sexual behaviors and disorders among evangelicals are especially desired because most literature about evangelicals and their sexuality is theoretical in nature. Research about evangelical male homosexuality in sexual addiction, an element that will be addressed in the literature of this study, is another issue that is sparse and is complicated by inconsistent views of Christian faith and societal homophobia (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell, 2007).

Lastly, the limitation in research based therapeutic interventions for evangelical men presents a significant concern for misdiagnosing and ineffective therapeutic interventions. Of all of the evangelical male college students who sought help for their sexual addiction over a two year period, Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell (2007) identified only 5% who displayed clear addictive patterns. Confusion over the concepts of forgiveness, gender issues, and faith may also be a significant factor in unsuccessful evangelical counseling. Much of the evangelical literature insists on forgiveness, but does not define it clearly, and this could leave evangelical counseling open to vast subjective interpretations and advice (Tracy, 1999). Different interpretations of gender roles and

issues among evangelical literature and organizations are often prescriptive and rigid as well as ambiguous, and this is a combination that may further enhance confusion and anxiety among evangelicals (Poling, 1991; Donovan, 1998; Singleton, 2004; Marshall & Taylor, 2006). Having absolute faith in God to take care of all of life's issues has continued to be the foundation of evangelical belief systems. For many evangelicals, if there is a conflict between what is experientially or reasonably known and what is found "in revelation, there is no question as to who has the last word. [Revelation prevails, and evangelicals] must stand corrected by God" (Knitter, 1985, p. 91). Understanding of Godly revelation, however, is obviously highly subjective, and Biblical interpretations may not always be clear; this may present significant issues for many evangelicals seeking personal guidance on matters such as sexual abuse, sexual addiction, marriage, and parenting because divine revelation is essentially grounded in the abstract (Tracy; Singleton; Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell).

Research Question

The main research question proposed in this study was: How are Evangelical Christian men who identify as sexually addicted influenced by their religious principles? One study found that evangelical teachings significantly influence evangelical men's views on sexuality and this may consequently have an impact on their views about sexual addiction (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell, 2007). This study, though limited, served as one of the motivators for this question. In addition, a need to help evangelical Christian men who feel that they suffer from sexual addictions and compulsions seems significant, testified by the growing scope of male-specific evangelical self-help literature and sexual purity movements. The responsibility of prescriptive yet confusing gender roles and

sexual expectations in this movement are also issues that informed the question. Finally, the limited understanding of the unique dynamics of evangelical men among the mainstream population implied a critical need to qualitatively examine this population. To answer the research question, a number of protocol questions, presented in Chapter 3, were posed.

Definitions of Terms

Evangelicalism – A Christian belief system based on the primary authority of the Bible as the absolute source of knowledge about God and humanity with specific loyalty to a literal interpretation of biblical scripture (Lienemann, 1998), the belief of the universal lordship of Jesus as the only savior of the world and the necessity to experience his saving power (being “born again”) along with an obligation to witnessing about Jesus so that all have an opportunity to be saved (Knitter, 1985).

Sexual Addiction – A condition where sexual behaviors produce pleasure and provide escape from internal distresses characterized by repeated failures to control those behaviors and a continuation of those behaviors despite significant harmful consequences (Goodman, 1992).

Recovery – The experience through which an individual utilizes internal and external resources to voluntarily resolve problems caused by addiction and to actively manage continued vulnerability to such problems (White, 2007).

Self-Help Group – A supportive, educational, and often change oriented group that focuses on a specific life problem or condition shared by all its members (Chappel & DuPont, 1999).

Twelve-Step Recovery – A set of guiding principles for recovery from addiction that involves admitting the loss of control over the addiction, identifying and improving contact with a higher power, examining past mistakes, making amends for those mistakes, and helping others who suffer from addiction (Jones, 1999).

Sexaholics Anonymous – A twelve-step recovery group where any form of sex with self or with partners other than the spouse is viewed as progressively addictive and destructive. Lust is seen as the driving force behind all sexual acting out. Acceptance of those beliefs is seen as crucial to recovery, and individuals who admit to having sexually obsessive or compulsive behaviors but would rather learn to control them than abstain from them are discouraged from participating (Sexaholics Anonymous, 1989).

Conceptual Framework

As evidenced in the review of literature, sex and Christianity have been widely studied in many domains (Else-Quest, Hyde, & DeLamater, 2005; May & Bohman, 1997; Poling, 2005; Shupe, 1995). Sexual addiction in the Christian tradition of evangelicalism, however, has been minimally examined, and the apparent void demonstrates a need for further exploration of this topic. It is evident in the literature that Evangelical teachings significantly influence Evangelical men's views on sexuality and may also have an impact on their views about sexual addiction (Kwee, Dominguez, & Ferrell, 2007). However, it is unclear *how* the lived world of Evangelical Christianity influences the sexual behaviors of men who identify as both sexual addicts and evangelical Christians. This qualitative approach enabled a rich insight into the question of *how*.

The use of an Existential-Phenomenological methodology allowed this researcher to illuminate the lived experiences of evangelical Christian men who identified as being

sexually addicted. The method allowed the depiction of personal and intimate aspects of this population as experienced and reported by the subjects. The primary aim of this research was not to affirm or deny a pre-conceived hypothesis but to *describe* the phenomenon as accurately as possible in the context that it appears.

Existential-Phenomenology

Primary to phenomenology is the principle of going “back to the ‘things themselves’” (Husserl 1970/1900 as cited in Giorgi, 1985, p. 7). This necessitates phenomenological researchers to study the “every day world where people are living through various phenomena in actual situations” (Giorgi, 1985, p. 7) independent of “presuppositions, explanations, and theories” (Cohn, 1994, p. 700). The primary aim of Existential-Phenomenology is to understand the phenomenon of human existence by illuminating the phenomenon or essence of the lived human experience while preserving intrinsic human concepts (Luijpen & Koren, 1969).

Bias and the Problem of Bracketing

Bias, a significant concern in qualitative research, is shaped by individuals’ “‘common sense’ preunderstandings, suppositions, assumptions, and the existing bodies of scientific knowledge” (Van Manen, 1990. p. 46). “Bracketing,” a Husserlian concept of phenomenological reduction in which one disconnects from preconceived notions in an attempt to defend the objectivity of interpretation (Koch, 1995, p. 829), is flawed because people cannot, even momentarily, separate themselves from their notions. Because individuals are inextricably linked to the world in which they live (Heidegger, 1962), they cannot suspend their beliefs or “bracket” any experience. In the realm of research, this situation seems problematic because there is no ideal objectivity due to the

inherent situated nature of the researcher. However, understanding or interpreting is independent of a correct procedure; rather, dependence is placed on the essential and unavoidable hermeneutic circle.

The Hermeneutic Circle

In hermeneutic reflection, the researcher must concentrate on the focal point (the data), throughout all the constant distractions that originate within. In this process, the researcher's current conceptions can be replaced by more suitable ones (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 269).

Interpretation does not depend on the process of "bracketing" (Husserl, 1929/1960) because interpretation is a revisionary process. Every revision of a pre-conception is capable of projecting a new projection of meaning. Competing projections can surface alongside each other until it becomes clearer what the agreement of meaning is. The modified nature of understanding and interpretation is formed by this constant process of new projection (Gadamer, 1975/2004). This circle is essential and unavoidable in the course of understanding because there is always a movement from the object trying to be understood to personal understandings and then back to the object (Heidegger, 1971/2005). The circularity of understanding is that each person understands in terms of what he or she already knows (Packer & Addison, 1989).

Quantitative analysis is not free of bias either because of its inherent dependence on the human dynamic. Despite the mathematical nature of reliability, validity, and generalizability of this kind of analysis, it contains the human element, and thus, it is always biased (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Since all science is mediated by subjective beings, absolute objectivity in any discipline is impossible. And so, in

qualitative research, researchers limit subjectivity by always regarding data in the context of life events while clearly and consistently identifying both the subjects' and the researcher's perceptions.

Delimitations of the Study

For the purpose of this study, the researcher was only interested in evangelical Christian men who identified as sexual addicts and were involved in a recovery group such as Sexaholics Anonymous (SA). The specific requirements that SA has for its members parallels evangelic beliefs about sexuality, and this researcher assumed a higher rate of evangelical participation in SA compared to other twelve-step sex addiction organizations. Because phenomenological reflection requires the person to be retrospective rather than introspective, men who were not engaging in active sexually addictive behaviors were chosen. Since the researcher was only interested in self-identified sexual addiction and not in whether the subjects met criteria for sexual addiction, the length of time subjects felt they had been in recovery was not a significant factor. The nature of the sexual addiction was also not an excluding factor. For this study, all men selected had to meet four primary criteria in order to participate. Subjects had to: (a) be 18 years of age or older, (b) meet the criteria for evangelical Christians, (c) self-identify as recovering sexual addicts, and (d) use the same language as the researcher (English). The criteria that each man had to meet to qualify as an evangelical Christian for this study were beliefs in: (a) the absolute authority of biblical scripture as a source of knowledge of God and how to live a Christian life, (b) Jesus Christ as God incarnate and the savior of sinful humankind, (c) the lordship of the Holy Spirit, (d) the necessity of personal conversion (being born-again), (e) the need to evangelize both individually and

as a church, and (f) the importance of the communion of Christians for spiritual sustenance, fellowship, and development. These questions were used during the screening interview, and qualifying answers were based on subject self-report.

Conclusions about the lived experiences of evangelical self proclaimed sexually addicted men are lacking; because most of the literature on this topic is theoretical in nature, conclusions have largely been dependant on presuppositions and common sense. The results of this study were aimed to offer a significant contribution to the field by providing empirical information; this researcher aimed to present the lived experiences of this population through individual interviews and follow-up interviews. Although the researcher came into the study with a few assumptions, these assumptions were expected to be challenged and/or changed by the data that was collected. This metamorphosis of opinion was not only expected but also welcomed.

Conceptual Assumptions

The first assumption is that most subjects would be conservative evangelicals and view homosexual behaviors as unacceptable. This was based on literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the mission statement of Sexaholics Anonymous: any form of sex with self or with partners other than the spouse is viewed as progressively addictive and destructive. Another presupposition was that some of the subjects would have had significant stress in their marital relationships prior to exhibiting sexual addictive behaviors. This assumption was based on the belief that addiction starts as a coping mechanism and sexual addiction may serve as a coping tool for a stressful marital relationship. Subjects were also assumed to have fairly rigid belief systems about what sexuality should look like in the eyes of God, and this researcher presumed that subjects

would have a pattern of consistently seeking guidance of their church leaders on sexual matters. Finally, confusion over gender roles and reaction formation were also assumed to be contributive factors of subjects' sexual experiences.

Organization of the Dissertation

This chapter presents an introduction of the inquiry by presenting three primary aspects of the problematic issue of evangelical sexual addiction: (a) Evangelical self-help literature and sexual purity groups continue to multiply, (b) evangelicals conservative understanding of sexuality do not merge with a growing mainstream liberalism about sexuality, and (c) there is an increase of confusion and distress among self-proclaimed evangelical sexual addicts because of the vague understanding of both sexual addiction and sexual purity. The problem of sexual indiscretions tied to a unique view of sexual morality is presented along with an explanation of why formal sexual addiction assessment instruments may not apply to evangelicals. Also addressed is the need to move beyond anecdotal discussions about evangelical sexual issues and towards identifying legitimate needs. Because the unique needs of evangelical men are misunderstood by the main-stream population, because only limited research exists about evangelical men who identify as sexual addicts, and because beneficial clinical interventions are lacking, the rationale for this study is established. Presentations on the research question, definition of terms, the conceptual framework, and delimitations of this study conclude this chapter.

Chapter II provides the literature review in regard to religion, Christianity, evangelicalism, sexual morality, evangelical attitudes toward sexuality, sexual addiction, the sexual purity movement, repentance and forgiveness, sexual addiction paralleled with

sexual purity, prescriptive sex, evangelical perspectives of sexual addiction, evangelical interventions for sexual addiction, heterosexual evangelical stances, homosexual evangelicals, sexual addiction help for homosexual evangelicals, the fallen, and existential-phenomenological methodological theory.

Chapter III supplies the methodology that guides this investigation and how an existential-phenomenological inquiry supports the research question. A detailed description of the data analysis is provided.

Chapter IV is a report of the findings of the research through written descriptions of the subjects' lived experiences. Detailed analyses of the individual interviews and follow-up individual interviews along with emergent themes of the subjects' experiences are included.

Chapter V contains a dialogue with the literature and broad conclusions drawn from particular elements of the subjects' experiences. Suggestions for further research and implications for the counseling field close this chapter.

CHAPTER II:

Literature Review

Evangelical Christianity and sexuality may never before have been so markedly paralleled as when Ted Haggard, the former president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), stated that all surveys said that evangelicals had the best sex lives of any other group (Pelosi, 2007). The presumption that evangelical Christian beliefs and sexual attitudes work together in some way may be legitimate when considering the substantial amount of evangelical sexual literature that is written, the growing development of numerous evangelical self-help groups for sexual issues, and the history of public sex scandals pertaining to televangelists. Neil T. Anderson (1994), the president of *Freedom in Christ Ministries* and a Christian counselor stated that the vast majority of people he counseled for sexual addiction have been evangelical Christians “attending churches like yours and mine” (p. 14). In subsequent years, there has been a significant increase in clergy of all religious traditions struggling with cybersex addiction (Laaser & Gregoire, 2003) while the number of self-help literature and support groups continues to grow in the evangelical community in an effort to address the needs of evangelical men who identify as sexual addicts. While religious involvement has been shown to decrease other addictive behaviors such as substance use and gambling, sexual addictive behaviors have not been shown to be inversely affected by religiosity (Abell, Steenbergh, & Boivin, 2006).

In an effort to conceptualize the ever-changing movement of evangelicalism while illuminating the reason for denominational unyielding stances on divergent issues (even within the movement), it is necessary to explain the nature of religion, its often essential

nature, the fluidity within religion, and the reasoning for absolutist attitudes. Intertwined within Christian stances are strong opinions about sexuality and sexual morality, and so, the historical explanation of how Christians denominations disagreed and validated their stances is also presented in the literature review. Evangelicals have long been revolutionaries throughout religious history, pioneers of change, particularly in the sexual domain (Horowitz, 2002). Despite evangelicals' revolutionary history, the journey of change has stopped for many evangelical denominations, and conservative absolutist stances are among the most popular today. Revolutionaries continue to campaign within the evangelical movement, and homosexual evangelicals are among the most controversial groups. Disagreements about sexual morality continue in the evangelical movement, and the explanation through history provided in this literature review illuminates the culmination of some evangelical stances, the start of others, and the ongoing disputes and validations about belief systems. History is full of various explanations of the multifaceted nature of religions and the people who abide by them. In an effort to promote the understanding of this diverse movement, the explanation of the multifarious nature of evangelicalism is explained while still communicating the authority of each divergent evangelical stance.

Religion

Religious knowing is an exceedingly personal process that is related to and entwined with knowledge of self, and it necessitates a need to look past what is convenient or personally obvious (Watts & Williams, 1988). Arnold Toynbee (1972) argued that religion was the center of human life and was not a deceptive notion. He further postulated that the non-essentials of religions, the practices and propositions, were

unique to each of the belief systems. However, every religion contained essential truths and specific advisements, and these essentials were fundamentally the same. The essential truths include: (a) The universe is mysterious and the meaning of the world is not attainable in itself or in humanity, (b) the meaning of the world can be found in an Absolute presence, (c) this Absolute presence contains both truth and the goodness humans desire, and (d) human beings must abandon their inherent self-centeredness to live in harmony with the good of the Absolute. In seeking God, individuals perform “a social act,” (Toynbee, p. 327) and this is much of the reason that Toynbee argued for the consistent re-evaluation and adjustment of the non-essentials of religion, to suit an ever-changing history.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1990) stated that religious truth was created by the people who participated in the religion. For Smith (1985), making belief the central issue to religious life was faulty; faith was the appropriate term. There was no true religion to believe in because every religion became true as individuals appropriated it and interiorized it, living it daily. Frithjof Schuon (1984) also philosophized about differences and similarities in religions; he highlighted the divisions in the religious world between two different kinds of believers: esoteric and exoteric. Both kinds of believers existed among all the religions; no matter what the religion, esoteric believers had a common unity with other esoterics, and exoteric believers united with each other in the same way. Differences among religions may be accidental, cultural, or conditioned by time, yet, behind all these traditions, there is one common essence, and different religions utilize varying paths to attain the same goal. According to Jung (1938/1966), the journey towards an Absolute, or the image of God, is a necessary ingredient for psychological

health, and belief in the idea of God gives people life meaning as well as a source of history.

Christianity

Jung (1938/1966) believed that Christianity lost its bond with the God within because it became too “externalized, formalized, and institutionalized” (Knitter, 1985, p. 61). Because all knowledge is historical, knowledge involves interpretation (Gadamer, 1975/2004). Beliefs are not objective; they are formed by presuppositions that change reluctantly through overwhelming evidence (Kuhn, 1962). An absolutist attitude toward the truth of one’s own tenets and the falsehood of other religions’ tenets has been typical among evangelicals, though many evangelicals are aware of the philosophical developments about human knowledge and understand the limitation of that knowledge among all religions, including their own (Jones, 1999). However, it is argued that to be devout, religious people must live in absolute affirmation, and Christianity has been a minority in making this absolute claim (Rahner, 1978/2000).

There is multitude of Christian churches with varying interpretations, some of which have survived and others that have faded away. The denominational list includes but is not limited to: Roman Catholics, Quakers, Methodists, New Methodists, Mormons, Unitarians, Salvation Army, Pentecostals, Baptists, Presbyterians, Exclusive Brethren, New Apostolic Church, The New Church and Swedenborgianism, Seventh-Day Adventists, Branch Davidians, Worldwide Church of God, Christadelphians, Christian Science, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Liberal Catholic Church and Wandering Bishops, Christian Community and Anthroposophy, Unification Church, The Family, Jesus Army,

Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, International Church of Christ, Ellel Ministries, Toronto Blessing and Vineyard, and Alpha Course (Barrett, 2001).

Excluding a few exceptions such as Quakers and Unitarians, most committed Christian denominational members claim that they have the absolute truth. Many Christians, evangelicals included, depend on the original message of the Bible yet varying interpretations are vast among churches. The reasons for these variations stem from the nature of the biblical text itself, history, and denominations' attitudes about having the only truth (Barrett, 2001). Evangelicals and Jehovah's Witnesses both interpret the Bible literally yet differences in belief systems about the way life should be lived and particulars about Jesus' life are considerable (Barrett, 2001). Both sects, however, claim the absolute truth.

Evangelicalism

The word evangelical comes from the word *euangelion* – meaning “gospel,” “good news,” or “tidings”; evangelicals are “gospel people” called to share the good news of the gospel, and on this point, all evangelicals agree (Sweeney, 2005). Evangelical Christians participate in hundreds of different denominations, some of which even oppose each other (Knitter, 1985; Sweeney, 2005). The vast majority of evangelicals are Protestant and Protestant evangelicals have further branched out to Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptist denominations. Evangelical traditions also include Anglicans, Methodists, Holiness people, Pentecostals, Calvinists, and Arminians, among others (Sweeney, 2005). The denomination of evangelicals is non-existent because evangelicalism is a movement with no formal constitutional guidelines for faith and practice. Evangelicalism is better known for its differences than its unity, although,

theorists continue in their attempts to provide a general description of the evangelical movement (Sweeney, 2005). Despite evangelicals' significantly opposing views, evangelicalism is distinctly different from its Christian counterparts, and despite their many differences, evangelicals have a mutual doctrine.

Among many theories, these six characteristics are typically understood to be universal among evangelical Christians:

1. Absolute authority of the scripture as a source of knowledge of God and how to live a Christian life.
2. Jesus Christ understood as God incarnate and the savior of sinful humankind.
3. The lordship of the Holy Spirit.
4. Personal conversion as necessity (being born-again)
5. The need to evangelize both individually and as a church.
6. Importance of the communion of Christians for spiritual sustenance, fellowship, and development (McGrath, 1995).

Among all of the varieties of different Christians making absolute claims about having the right version of the truth, many evangelicals are no different. Despite a host of disagreements about non-essentials among evangelicals, there is one indisputable point; unless a person does not individually commit his or her life to Christ, being born-again, he or she is damned. For many evangelicals, their religion is the only truth and any other variety of Christianity is wrong (Barrett, 2001).

Many denominations exist within the evangelical movement, and the spectrum spans from varying degrees of conservative attitudes to more liberal stances. In the 1960s and 1970s, the "New Evangelical" movement was born, changing absolutist thinking for

many evangelicals who chose to swing towards an even more liberal stance (Knitter, 1985). New Evangelicals, better known as “Ecumenical Evangelicals” comprise the “New Evangelical Left” (Knitter, 1985, p. 77). Ecumenical evangelicals (a) are more open to extensive ecumenical cooperation with other Christians, (b) retreat from the belief that the Bible is absolutely without error and assert a limited biblical inerrancy or believe in the infallibility of the Bible only in matters of faith and practice but not necessarily in historical or scientific information, and (c) they also claim that past Evangelicals have been naive and supportive of an oppressive status quo, insisting that political involvement and liberation efforts of all that are oppressed are part of living the gospel (Knitter, 1985). Other types of evangelicals are Fundamentalists, who maintain the “seven fundamental doctrines of authentic Christianity: inerrant verbal inspiration of the Bible, virgin birth, miracles of Christ, physical resurrection, total depravity of the human being, substitutionary atonement, premillennial second coming,” and the Conservative Evangelicals who carry on the intent of Fundamentalism but are more open and critical about it (Knitter, 1985, p. 77). Despite significant differences among these three groups, all three still make up the evangelical family, insistent on the mutual doctrine mentioned previously.

As disagreements continue about evangelical core beliefs, the dispute about human sexuality inherently follows. Evangelicals have historically had strong beliefs about sexual morality; with growing divergent evangelical belief systems, debates multiply within the evangelical community, with other religions, and with the general population.

Sexual Morality

Throughout history, the Christian church has continued to respond to the question of human sexuality by depending on Bible scriptures. As the church's viewpoints concerning sex were influenced by culture, Christians' stances about sexual morality fluctuated throughout history. Just as culture influenced Christian sexual ethics, Christian sexual ethics shaped culture as the church increased in dominance in society (Grenz, 1997). Three major viewpoints have typified Christian sexual morality throughout history: sexuality within the context of morality, emphasis on celibacy, and marriage as norm. In the second century during the subapostolic era, Christian sexuality and marriage were both accepted as God's creation (Brown, 1989; Grenz). Because Gnosticism, a tenacious foe of Christianity, viewed the body as inherently evil and dejected marriage, early Christians emphasized the goodness of the body and viewed procreation and marriage as divinely ordained (Grenz).

Due to civil persecution in the subapostolic era, the emphasis on martyrdom grew, and the focus shifted away from sexual morality within marriage. Celibacy was emphasized and continued to be the ideal in the late fourth and early fifth century, the post-Constantinian era (Brown, 1989). As the focus shifted from the positivism of sexuality to the Fall (i.e. Adam and Eve), human sexuality was marred and the church began to associate sexuality with sin. The sex act, as a result, was tainted by the realm of lust, and thereby sin, even within marriage because marital commitments and raising children necessitated secular involvements (Grenz, 1997). As the Virgin Mary became a paradigm for Christians, celibacy became the favored lifestyle (Grenz). Sexual intercourse was associated with evil because of its connection to passion, and therefore to

compulsivity (Augustine, 397/1998). In the post-Constantinian era, marriage was primarily seen as a useful channel for passion towards a functional conclusion, which was procreation. As the Middle Ages approached in the fifth century, monasticism, the religious practice of renouncing worldly entanglements and focusing on spiritual pursuits, was the primary focus (Hanawalt, 1998). Sexual relations were discouraged and viewed as addictive and sinful.

Views on sexual expression shifted again in the sixteenth century during the Reformation, (or Protestant Reformation) as Reformers rejected the primacy of celibate life and criticized the demand of celibacy on clergy as well as the stance on lifelong chastity (Grenz, 1997). Protestants supported the innate nature of sex by stressing biblical references about people needing to be fruitful and to multiply (Horowitz, 2002).

As the Reformation continued, marriage was emphasized as a constructive responsibility. Marriage and parenting were ways in which Christians served God (Grenz, 1997). The breakdown of the Reformation began with the rise of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, where reason was favored over religion (Gay, 1969) and the euphoric and superior quality of sex was emphasized (Grenz). As secularization increased, religion was viewed as a personal matter and culture was not primarily dictated by religious doctrine. With a decrease in public religious interpretation of sexuality, sexual acts became private, personal matters (Grenz). The twentieth century continued to fluctuate between conservative attitudes and sexual freedom. For example, following a conservative family-oriented 1950s, the sexual revolution of the 1960s proclaimed a new era of sexual enjoyment, which was then followed by a safety-conscious culture in the 1980s due to a rising concern over sexually transmitted diseases, particularly the AIDS

virus. Many evangelicals find themselves living in a transitional era where their attitudes towards sexual morality are rooted in the Reformation, an era that no longer characterizes current generations (Grenz), realizing this, some evangelicals promote the need to change in an effort to align themselves with the modern culture (Anderson, 1992).

Evangelical Attitudes towards Sexuality

In this current generation, evangelicals have surrendered to a more liberal stance on some issues of sexual morality, though the general attitude for the majority of evangelicals concerning moral issues is strongly conservative (McConkey, 2001). Compared to religious progressives and moderates in 1998, evangelicals continued to have more traditional and conservative attitudes about gender roles and were the least tolerant toward homosexuality, premarital sex, adultery, pornography, teen birth control, sex education in schools, and abortion (McConkey). Despite the dominant conservative evangelical view, opposing viewpoints exist among evangelicals in the domain of sexual ethics. Evangelicals and other religious individuals who make religion a moral guide to everyday living tend to have less liberal sexual attitudes and behaviors whereas individuals inclined toward a utilitarian view of religion lean in the opposite direction (Wulf, Prentice, & Hansum, 1984; Rowatt & Schmitt, 2003). Nonetheless, many opposing evangelical views have stemmed from the evangelical understanding that the Bible should be read as a literal interpretation; paradoxically, these opposing viewpoints are all grounded in literal understandings of the same text, the biblical scriptures. Belief systems about gender roles and homosexuality are the strongest points of contention within the evangelical movement, and opposing evangelical beliefs are firm on each side, each grounding the opposing view in the literal interpretation of the Bible. Because many

of the evangelical stances on how sexuality should be expressed are based on beliefs about gender roles and opinions about same-sex unions, detailed descriptions of vastly opposing evangelical views are included in an attempt to illuminate the complex nature of differing opinions in the movement and the confusion and opposition that results.

Gender Roles

Creation stories have long determined gender roles among many cultures, (Sanday, 1981) and the biblical creation story about Adam and Eve is at the heart of evangelical gender role doctrine. Evangelical Christians strongly affirm that human beings are sexual creatures and that people are divided into two sexually determined groups, male and female. As the feminist movement expanded in the mainstream population, gender roles in the marriage changed; it is this cultural shift in hierarchy that has instigated ongoing debate among evangelicals with differing views (Grenz, 1997). Conservative evangelical views about marriage place the man over the woman (Derogatis, 2005; Poling, 2005; Singleton, 2004; Donovan, 1998; White, 1993; Dobson, 1982). Evangelicals favoring this hierarchical view defend their understanding through the order of creation because Adam was created before Eve (Robertson, 1982; Dobson). Scriptures such as the verse in 1 Corinthians 11:9, *Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man*, serve as a defense for conservatives' understandings about the prescription for male dominance in the marriage union (Grenz). Other evangelicals, also depending on biblical scriptures to support their argument, argue that the woman was originally assigned the more significant and dominant role. In the second creation story written in Genesis 2, the man in the relationship is described as the one who leaves his family and cleaves to his wife; this is understood as a clear matriarchal arrangement (Grenz). In

Genesis 3, Eve is distinguished as the dominant figure because she is the one approached by the serpent; she sins on her own whereas Adam follows his wife into sin. The creation of woman for man in 1 Corinthians 11:9 or as man's helper in Genesis 2 is understood in terms of the woman being the one who rescues man from solitude. Because the woman is considered to be the driving force of God's saving design, she is once again cast in a dominant role (Grenz).

Both evangelical views agree that the hierarchical relationship of male over female is clearly present in Genesis. The distinction for alternative views, however, is that this hierarchy is introduced *after* the Fall. That is, the established hierarchy is a consequence of the sin of the initial relationship of Adam and Eve, and so God's statement to Eve, "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." in Genesis 3:16, is understood as a curse rather than a command from God (Grenz, 1997). Rather than a prescription for the way that married life should be, as conservatives agree, this statement is alternatively considered to be a description of present day life after the Fall. The decision to have male dominate over female in Genesis is distinctly clear, yet alternative evangelical views explain the reasoning for this gender assignment anthropologically. In anthropological research, the character of a society is determined by the relationships between genders. Male domination leads to a hostile environment while an environment that has equality of the sexes is frequently beneficent (Dozier, 2002; Sanday, 1981). In Genesis, the curse which resulted from human sin gave rise to both a hostile environment and to male dominance (Grenz).

Homosexuality

The stance on homosexuality in conservative evangelicalism is that a homosexual lifestyle is inherently sinful (Grenz, 1998; Dobson 1982). The seven central passages that guide traditional evangelicals' beliefs about the immorality of homosexual acts include the story of Lot in Sodom where the men from Sodom wanted to have sex with Lot's two male angelic guests (Genesis 19:4 – 11), a similar episode in Gibeah (Judges 19), written prohibitions in the Holiness Code (Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13), and Paul's discussion of homosexual practices in his condemnation of the Gentiles (Romans 1:26-27) as well as his list of moral infractions (1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10). Traditionally, these passages have communicated a clear rejection of homosexual behavior, yet a growing number of interpreters have disagreed with this stance (Grenz, 1998). These scholars argue that the incidents in Sodom and Gibeah primarily outline the transgressions of inhospitality, attempted rape, and desire to cohabit with angels; the Holiness Code prohibitions refer to sexual acts that are idolatrous; Paul's sanctions refer to Roman cultural practices such as pederasty and homosexual prostitution. These experts conclude that none of the scriptures refer to homosexuality as a natural sexual orientation nor do they condemn physical expressions within committed same-sex relationships. Some scholars have also proposed that David and Jonathan, two primary biblical heroes, may have been homosexual lovers, noting Jesus' silence on this topic (Grenz). The recent affirming biblical insights about homosexuality have enabled many individuals to embrace their evangelicalism as well as their homosexual orientation.

The Nature of Sexual Addiction

Sexual issues have long been topics of interest. *Aristotle's Master-piece*, a guide to sexual matters, was first written in the seventeenth century and continued to be a best-seller throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Bush, 1999). With the growing interest in sexual matters came clinical interest in sexual pathologies. In 1886, psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebbing published *Psychopathia sexualis*, a compilation of case studies about sexual perversions. Krafft-Ebbing theorized that sexual desire had to be aimed at procreation and sexual desires that were not designed for procreation were perversions. For example, homosexuality was a perversion under his theory, but rape, despite being an abnormal act, was not considered perverse since pregnancy was possible (Krafft-Ebbing, 1886/1965). Alternative theories about sexual perversions have followed, and disagreements about the exact nature of sexual pathology are continually examined.

Interest in inadequately controlled sexual behavior significantly increased in 1983 when Patrick Carnes published his book *Out of the shadows: Understanding sexual addiction*. Since Carnes, vast literature about inadequately controlled sexual behavior accumulated, and disagreements pertaining to the correct characteristics and the appropriate title (sexual addiction, sexual dependence, sexual compulsivity, sexual impulsivity or sexual impulse control, or excessive sexual behavior) for this condition still continue (Gold & Heffner, 1998).

Determining how to best classify this syndrome is important for finding suitable treatment, and further research on this topic is needed, though disagreement will most likely continue until further data is gathered. Nonetheless, most theorists agree that sexual addiction is both progressive and cyclical. While some scholars have argued that sexual

addiction labels refer to “learned patterns that are stigmatized by dominant institutions” (Levine & Troiden, 1988, p. 347), many experts ascertain that there are higher levels of problematic symptoms among self-identified sexual addicts compared to other groups of people, underscoring that diagnosis does not merely aim to pathologize a sexual lifestyle that may be culturally disapproved (Gold & Heffner, 1998).

Sexual Addiction

The term sexual addiction is often used given the argument that sexually addicted individuals continue to fail to control their behavior despite harmful consequences (Carnes, 1983; Goodman, 1998). This state of inadequately controlled sexual behavior is best met by the diagnostic code of an addictive disorder, so sexual addiction is often thought to be closely correlated with substance addiction criteria (Goodman). Sex is often experienced as a mood-altering experience, quite similar to a drug in the addictive disorder (Carnes).

Sexual Dependence

Dependence refers to a behavior that is motivated by the attempt to reach a “pleasurable internal state via gratification of needs, basic or derived” (Goodman, 1992, p. 304). While the concept dependence does address the physical pleasure that is associated with sexual activities, the escape from internal discomfort is not included in the sexual dependence definition (Goodman).

Sexual Compulsivity

The term sexual compulsivity has been used to define sexual addiction as understood by the criteria of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). As in OCD, sexual compulsive behavior is driven by anxiety (Coleman, 1990; Anthony & Hollander, 1993).

Criteria for obsessive-compulsive disorder specify that OCD activities can not be pleasurable. Because sexually compulsive acts are initially pleasurable, they do not completely fit OCD criteria (Anthony & Hollander). However, in some cases, many sexually addicted individuals later continue to participate in sexual behaviors despite finding them unsatisfying, and therefore uncontrolled sexual activity can be classified by OCD diagnostic criteria (Gold & Heffner, 1998).

Sexual Impulse Control or Sexual Impulsivity

Other theorists use the term sexual impulsivity and attribute this condition to impulse-control disorder. In the DSM-IV-TR, impulse control disorder is described as a “failure to resist an impulse, drive, or temptation to perform an act that is harmful to the person or to others;” often “the individual feels an increasing sense of tension or arousal before committing the act and then experiences pleasure, gratification, or relief at the time of committing the act. Following the act there may or may not be regret, self-reproach, or guilt” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 663). Similar to individual diagnosed with impulse-control disorder, people with this sexual impulsivity engage in sexual behavior despite knowing that it could be detrimental, often have increased tension or arousal before the act, relief during the act, and possible regret after the sexual act (Barth & Kinder, 1987).

Criteria Used for this Study

For this study, the researcher employs the term Sexual Addiction and utilizes Aviel Goodman’s (1992) measures to understand sexual addiction since he provides the most complete review of literature in terms of theoretical models (Bancroft & Vukadinovic, 2004). The criteria are:

1. Recurrent failure to resist impulses to engage in a specified sexual behavior.
2. Increasing sense of tension immediately prior to initiating the sexual behavior.
3. Pleasure or relief at the time of engaging in the sexual behavior.
4. At least five of the following:
 - a. frequent preoccupation with the sexual behavior or with activity that is preparatory to the sexual behavior
 - b. frequent engaging in the sexual behavior to a greater extent or over a longer period than intended
 - c. repeated efforts to reduce, control, or stop the sexual behavior
 - d. a great deal of time spent in activities necessary for the sexual behavior, engaging in the sexual behavior, or recovering from its effects
 - e. frequent engaging in the sexual behavior when expected to fulfill occupational, academic, domestic, or social obligations
 - f. important social, occupational, or recreational activities given up or reduced because of the sexual behavior
 - g. continuation of the sexual behavior despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent social, financial,

psychological, or physical problem that is caused or exacerbated by the sexual behavior

- h. tolerance: need to increase the intensity or frequency of the sexual behavior in order to achieve the desired effect, or diminished effect with continued sexual behavior of the same intensity
 - i. restlessness or irritability if unable to engage in the sexual behavior
5. Some symptoms of the disturbance have persisted for at least one month or have occurred repeatedly over a longer period of time.
- (p. 306)

The Progression and Cycle of Sexual Addiction

Carnes (1983) incorporates a level system to understand the progression of sexual addiction. Level One exemplifies a person who engages in victimless sexual behavior such as excessive masturbation, use of pornography, or consensual sex. Level Two describes the person who engages in behaviors such as voyeurism and exhibitionism, behaviors that are victimizing but are seen as nuisance offenses. Level Three behaviors include activities such as rape or incest, representative of the most severe progression of sexual addiction (Carnes). Carnes' hypothesis of sexual addiction as a progressive disorder (that untreated sexual addiction may evolve into sexual offending) has not been supported in published empirical research (Gold & Heffner, 1998).

Wolfe (1988) asserts that sexual addiction is cyclical, as do many experts in the field (Gold & Heffner, 1998). For Wolfe, the cycle begins with an inferior self-image

because of depression and dissatisfaction with one's life. Next, the individual begins to isolate but compensates with sexual fantasies or behaviors in an attempt to escape or reduce the suffering. The fantasies, if acted upon, result in guilt, which is first acknowledged but then denied along with the promise that the behavior will not happen again. The person's self-image becomes more negative because of self-condemnation of the activity. Anxiety increases, which also increases the temptation to further engage in the sexual behavior the individual pledged to abandon (Wolf). Research has supported the notion that sexually addicted individuals have problematic interactions between mood and sexuality (Bancroft & Vukadinovic, 2004), and current literature continues to suggest that the cycle of sexual addiction follows a distinctive path (Figure1). The cyclical path presented by Gold and Heffner is used by this researcher to understand the progression and cycle of sexual addiction.

Treatment for Sexual Addiction

Carnes (1983) proposed a 12 step program modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous' twelve steps of recovery for people suffering from sexual addiction. In his research, Quadland (1985) found that group psychotherapy helped sexually addicted individuals reduce the frequency of sexual encounters with different partners, however, his research was limited to 30 gay and bisexual men in New York City. Schwartz and Brasted (1985) outlined a six-stage therapeutic program involving group and couples treatment which moved the sexually addicted individual towards a fulfilling monogamous relationship. Goodman (1992) recommended a combination of psychotherapy and individual pharmacotherapy along with supportive groups such as twelve-step programs as supplements. Zitzman and Butler (2005) evaluated the processes of conjoint therapy for

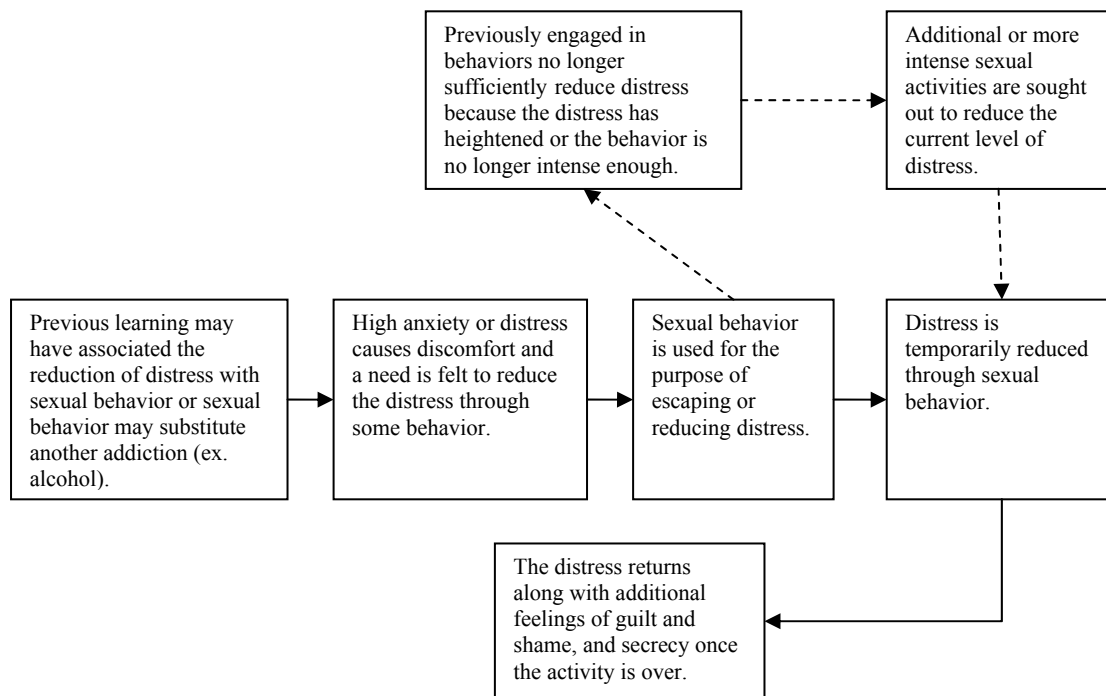


Figure 1. Progression and Cycle of Sexual Addiction

married couples recovering from husbands' addictive use of pornography, and found that there was an increase in marital trust and confidence for the future and recommended conjoint marital therapy as a useful component in treating compulsive pornography consumption.

Through recent research, drug interventions such as Topiramate may be deemed the new miracle drug for sexual addictions. A study about one 32 year old man who “was able to completely stop engaging in [problematic] sexual behaviors while taking Topiramate” when treatment failed him supported the usefulness of this drug; treatment consisted of “12 sessions of cognitive behavioral therapy” (Fong, De La Garza, & Newton, 2005, ¶ 6). A recent outcome-study aimed at treating men in a group setting for problematic Internet-enabled sexual behavior (IESB), composed of a combination of

Readiness to Change (RtC), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and Motivational Interviewing (MI) interventions, did not succeed in reducing the participants' problematic computer use (Hecht Orzack, Voluse, Wolf, & Hennen, 2006); however, the relationship between online sexual behavior and offline sexual behavior is not yet completely understood. For example, individuals deemed as the “Discovery Group” never exhibited any previous problematic sexual behaviors until they discovered the internet (Carnes, Delmonico, & Griffin, 2001). This may presume a distinctive characteristic of online sexual pathology. Despite ongoing findings and disagreements, most experts agree that sexually-addicted individuals need a combination of individual, group, couples, and drug therapy interventions.

The Sexual Purity Movement

As the Enlightenment continued in the nineteenth century, persistent secularization threatened evangelical views on sexual morality. Frances Wright, a social reformer, beckoned for a hall of science in each city to serve as a secular center that gave people access to museums, libraries, and teaching rooms. She rented a building in New York that used to be the Ebenezer Baptist Church and established The Hall of Science in the early 1800s (Horowitz, 2002). The New York Hall of Science established full day programs on Sundays that included children’s activities, evening lectures, and scientific education seminars (Horowitz). Among many secular and controversial printed works housed in the building was Richard Carlile’s controversial book *Every Woman’s Book*. First published in 1826 in England, Carlile was the first English author to give comprehensive and explicit information about birth control (Horowitz). Robert Dale

Owen followed with *Moral Physiology* in 1831, authoring the first book about contraception written in the United States (Horowitz).

The Tract House was located across the street from Hall of Science and represented the renewed evangelical Christian movement also sweeping the nation at that time. The 1820s, marked the growing tension between both movements, and prominent evangelicals addressed earlier Christian beliefs with renewed fervor, establishing lust as a chief component of sexual sin. As the number of Christian denominations grew and church membership increased, religious individuals who felt they were saved by God felt that they could bring salvation to others. The tract societies joined the churches in this effort, and the expanding power of print was used to inexpensively publish Bibles and religious pamphlets for expansive distribution. Evangelicals were among the first groups to take advantage of the reduced costs of publishing, bringing in the newest machines and introducing innovative techniques in printing, organization, and distribution. In 1830, the Hall of Science started producing their own tracts, responding to their rivals as well as publishing pamphlets on a wide range of subjects. Due to an increased printing capability, conflicting ideas and values were able to massively circulate throughout the nation (Horowitz, 2002).

The tension between evangelicals and freethinkers from the Hall of Science grew, and freethinkers invited evangelical tractarians for debate. As evangelicals fought to convert the secular public, they stressed sexual restraint and, for many evangelicals, free thought was an abomination because it led to lust-driven sin. Evangelicals thought that the freethinkers were a threat to children so they presumed to know nothing about sex because sexual ignorance was essential to restricting sexual behaviors (Horowitz, 2002).

Just like in the 1800s, the sexual revolution of the 1960s inspired a renewed evangelical sexual movement, sexual purity. As secular movements tried to broaden sexual expression beyond the boundaries of marriage, evangelicals fought back with their views about the deep meaning of the sexual act and the importance of keeping it within a context of marriage, as intended by God's divine purpose (Grenz, 1997). Many authors who have written about sexual purity stress waiting until marriage to have sex as a means to a happy marriage. Dana Gresh (2007), author of *And the bride wore white: Seven secrets to sexual purity*, introduces her book with her personal marriage experience and the book reads more like a fairytale than a self-help book.

But when my eyes met my husband's deep blue ones . . . full of compassion and true love . . . the nervousness was replaced with a knowing. We had waited. We had made it through the maze of temptation, and now a warm and comforting Presence was with us, assuring us that this covenant into which we were about to enter would be blessed. And the blessing was more than we hoped for. (p. 14)

Most discussions of sexual purity point to lust as a primary problem. Among varying definitions, lust is commonly described as a sexual craving of something forbidden by God (Harris, 2003; Harris, 2004). Virginity is consistently seen as something to be protected and valued, saving one's self for marriage is a quintessential part of the sexual purity movement (Gresh, 2007; Elliot, 2006). Today the consequences of sexual immorality, defined as choosing not to follow sexual purity guidelines, range anywhere from disappointing God (Harris; Harris; Elliot; Gresh) to having marriage

problems (Elliot; Gresh) to damaging one's life via drugs, prostitution, and/or becoming a sexual predator (Alcorn, 2003) to tragic death (Graham, 1984).

Sexual Purity and Sexual Addiction

When the concept of alcoholism was heavily marketed between the 1960s and 1980s, drinking did not increase in the United States, but, according to the research of the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIDA), there was a significant increase in people reporting symptoms of alcohol dependence, and the rise of self-proclaimed alcoholic symptomology has not decreased since (Peele, 2000). According to Peele's examination of epidemiological findings, addictive experience can be preceded and determined by the correspondence of one's thinking about addiction in general way while reflecting about one's behavior. That is, how one thinks about addiction influences the way that one becomes addicted. People "learn to be addicted through the expectations [they] develop about specific involvements" (Peele, p. 599). With the increase of the amount of evangelical literature about sexual purity paralleled with the popularization of the concept of sexual addiction, it remains speculative that Peele's study may be analogous to an increase in the number of evangelicals who wonder if their unwanted sexual desires are consequences of an addiction (Kwee, Dominguez, Ferrell, 2007).

In his phenomenological study about self deception, Fischer (1985) found that self-deception sustains an unchanging sense of one's relations to others and to the world. In essence, it is a rigid reassertion "that one already knows who one has been, is, or can become" (p. 153). Arguably, if one is guided by a rigid assertion that sexual purity is God's expectation of human beings, adherence to this assertion is crucial and actualizing it in one's life is feasible. Self-deception has shown to be "a flight from the anxiously

distressing ambiguities of one's life," (Fischer, p. 152), and so, if one could not comply with the expectations of the sexual purity movement, it is speculated that the pathologizing of otherwise standard sexual urges could ensue. It has also been argued that the church has been a contributing factor in producing guilt and shame (Nelson, 2003). In one theory, sexual addiction is rooted in shame, and the church often reinforces shame, repeatedly linking certain kinds of sexuality to sin and using sexual shame as a way to control. Out of fear of condemnation, people hide their sexuality and isolate. Because isolation leads to secrecy and secrecy perpetuates problems, sexual addictions have a prime opportunity to develop in this cycle (Nelson, 2003). It would be too simplistic to blame religion as the sole cause of sexual addiction in otherwise normal people considering the multifaceted nature of sexual addiction; it is comprised of physiological, emotional, psychological, relational, and spiritual components (Ferree, 2001 as cited in Nelson, 2003), all of which cannot be attributed to one driving factor. However, it would be equally simplistic to completely disregard religious influence as a significant factor when considering a sexually addicted person who is religious since, particularly in the evangelical population, religious doctrine is a vital factor that determines how that person be-in-the-world.

Prescriptive Sex

Resources for evangelical prescriptive sexuality can easily be found through evangelical sex manuals, self-help literature, and sexual purity groups. Though more liberal evangelical resources about sexuality have been written (Grenz, 1997), the majority of evangelical authors has painstakingly delegated specifics about sexual expression within an essential heterosexual marriage (Harris, 2003; Harris, 2004; Elliot,

2006; Gresh, 2007; White, 1993; Dobson, 1982). In conservative evangelicalism, the husband is the head of the family, the wife maintains a compliant role, and sex is a gift from God. Such Christian couples should celebrate sex only within the context of marriage, and sex outside of wedlock is viewed as a sin (White; Dobson). Prescriptive hierarchical gender roles have been argued to be contributors to blaming behaviors because spouses have often been accused of enhancing their partners' addictions due to neglecting their gender role duties, duties that may be implicitly or explicitly emphasized (Laaser & Gregoire, 2003). Because individuals in a couple naturally have "very different sexual appetites," these differences in libido can easily pose problems in establishing satisfying sexual relationships (Resnick, 2002, p. 8). Sexual guilt, which may often be created by blame or expectations, further creates anxiety and discourages sexual activity (Long, Cate, Fehsenfeld, and Williams, 1996; Sac, Keller, & Hinkle, 1984, as cited in Quest, Shibley, & DeLamater, 2005). Arguably, divisive gender arguments and rigid prescriptions around sex may have significant roles in exacerbating existing sexual and relational problems.

Evangelical Sex Manuals

Most evangelical sex manuals were written by husband and wife and have embodied the theme of "male leadership and female submission in marriage" (Derogatis, 2005, p. 111). Husband and wife are both held responsible for sexual fulfillment in the marriage, but men receive more instructions in all evangelical sex manuals. This reasoning is due to the fundamentalist belief that men are "uncomplicated, unemotional, noncommunicative, and visually aroused" (Derogatis, p. 126). In essence, the wife holds the responsibility for her husband's sexual satisfaction. In *The act of marriage: The*

beauty of sexual love, the authors state that men's egos and strong sex drives are tied; a man will suffer from low self esteem and become lazy if his wife does not continue to fulfill her husband's natural sexual needs (LaHaye & LaHaye, 1998). Lahaye and Lahaye discuss a case example of a woman whose husband divorced her because he "could no longer tolerate her self-imposed abstinence or celibacy, and he became attracted to someone who was more responsive to his sexual needs" (p.23). The authors state that they do not condone the husband leaving his family but "it would not have happened if his wife had not been afflicted with an unbiblical mental attitude toward married love" (p. 23). Most Evangelical sex manuals state that men cannot control their sexual desires without difficulty, and marriage is the appropriate way for "men to channel their natural sexual energy to one appropriate woman" (Derogatis, p. 127). Marabel Morgan (1990), a self proclaimed Evangelical supporter of feminism and author of *The total woman: How to make your marriage come alive*, supports traditional evangelical gender roles and urges women to view sex in a positive way by learning to be the object of their husbands' sexual fantasies. According to Morgan, women are responsible for keeping their sexually charged husbands satisfied and that female power is the wife's exploitation of her husband's sexual wishes for her own material gain. Morgan continually warns women about the hazards of the sexually unfulfilled man as she discusses the wife's responsibility to keep her husband sexually satisfied. Evangelical messages tout that men are not responsible for their sexual desires because their libidos are natural; because men can not control their sexual urges, wives have the responsibility of helping their husbands channel their sexual energy.

Self-Help Literature

James Dobson (1980) states that genuine Christians should understand that sexual differences are biological, and, in understanding, marriage partners should please the natural desires of their spouses. When men's sexual responses are blocked, states Dobson (1982), they experience an "accumulating physiological pressure which demands release" (p. 408). Other women are of little interest to men when they are sexually satisfied, but when this sexual pressure builds, men tend to be eroticized just being in the presence of women. Because the male desire is dictated by biology, Dobson urges women to "seek to satisfy those needs as meaningfully and as regularly as possible," that is, "if she really loves him" (p. 408).

John White (1993), a Christian author who supports a biblical view of sexuality, states that the combination of love and sex exemplifies sexual health. He states that "a common pattern in marriage is for a man to be preoccupied with his sex drive while his wife is starved for affection" (p. 103). Because sex preoccupies the man and love preoccupies the woman, the marriage suffers due to miscommunication. White also differentiates between men and women and places men as the superior sex, because, though God is the source of both femininity and masculinity, God is more masculine than feminine because God initiates (a male trait) rather than responds (a female trait). In White's argument, sexually deviant men are victims because they are unable to control their sexual drives and their wives are not meeting their sexual needs. Among much of the evangelical self-help literature, the wife is in one way or another responsible for her husband's uncontrollable sexual desire. Lust is also a significant sin in most evangelical

literature, which includes looking at other women (or men) and being sexually aroused by them (Arterburn, Stoeker, & Yorkey, 2000; Harris, 2003; Harris, 2004).

Sexual Morality Groups and Men's Movements

Evangelical men's movements, groups and organizations designed to help evangelical men deal with sexuality and relationship issues, are vast, and most are conservative in nature. Promise Keepers focuses on helping men keep their promises to their families, concentrating on men's responsibility to be leaders in their families (Clatterbaugh, 2000). The seven promises include: (a) honoring Jesus through worship, prayer, and obedience to God's word, (b) pursuing vital relationships with a few other men in an effort to help keep promises, (c) commitment to spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity, (d) building strong marriages through love, protection, and biblical values, (e) supporting the church by praying for the pastor and giving of time and resources, (f) reaching beyond racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity, and (g) influencing the world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28: 19-20) (Promise Keepers, 2008b).

James Dobson's Focus on the Family is an organization that offers evangelical families six guiding philosophies called "pillars" that are understood to be recommendations from God: (a) the preeminence of evangelism, (b) the permanence of

marriage, (c) the value of children, (d) the sanctity of human life, (e) the importance of social responsibility, and (f) the value of male and female (Dobson, 2008a).

Every Man's Battle is one of the largest evangelical associations specific to helping men recover from sexual addictions, offering counseling, group work, books, articles, podcasts, and "Weekly Battle Plans." "Weekly Battle Plans" are free to download, a new one is offered every Monday for downloading, and each plan includes a group leader's guide, a group member's guide, a weekly devotional, a weekly battle plan, and the seven keys to spiritual transformation (Every Man's Battle, 2008a). The seven keys to spiritual transformation in Every Man's Battle are each grounded in a bible scripture and are: (a) surrender (1 Peter 5:6), (b) acceptance (Psalm 139:1), (c) confession (James 5:16), (d) responsibility (Galatians 6:5), (e) forgiveness (Matthew 6:14), (f) transformation (II Corinthians 1:4), and (g) preservation (Philippians 2:12-13) (Every Man's Battle, 2008b).

In most of the evangelical men's movements today, the gender expectation of a male and female partnership and the hierarchy of male dominance are clear. Promise Keepers does not involve women in working out the problems within their marriages because men view women as different thinking beings (Bartkowski, 2000). Men find it more productive to work through their marital problems with other men at Promise Keepers. Promise Keepers holds men accountable for their behaviors, encourages communication within their marriages, and stresses accountability as a key factor in the forgiveness of sexual sin (Bartkowski). Men meet in "accountability groups" to discuss their issues with other men and are required to answer to their group about resolving their identified issues (Barkowski). It has been argued that men's movements that are

dismissive of women attendees by design could have the potential to preclude gender equality, situating women as the ‘other’ against which men define themselves (Messner, 1997).

Focus on the Family provides a host of resources to help couples define gender roles, and clearly designates the dominant role as male. “Although a passive man may possess qualities such as kindness, gentleness or patience,” states author Otis (2008, ¶ 4), “he is largely ineffective as a provider and protector”. Focus on the Family places importance on parents providing proper or “God given” gender roles for their children (Otis, ¶ 4), and offers prescriptive plans for helping mothers and fathers guide their children into appropriate gender roles. Otis tells mothers to “support and show respect for [their] husbands’ masculine role in the home and in the lives of [their] sons and daughters,” and asks single moms to, “introduce [their] children to trusted male role models who exemplify godly manhood” (Otis, ¶ 13). Fathers are counseled in giving their “sons opportunities to discover their masculine selves through challenges and reasonable risks” (Otis, 2008, ¶ 16).

Every Man’s Battle offers multiple resources for men and provides articles from Every Man’s Ministries, an organization that places men at the forefront of God’s ultimate plan, distinguishing men from women as God’s priority (Luck, 2003). Stephen Arterburn (2007), creator of Every Man’s Battle, places significant blame on poor fatherly relationships or absence of fathers in the contribution to sexual addiction, coining the term “father wounds.”

Evangelicalism and Sexual Addiction

Nine out of ten of the 565 men who met at a Christian Conference stated that lust, pornography, and fantasizing were continual or seriously divisive factors in their relationships with God (Luck, 2002, as cited in Nelson, 2003). In one study, men with sexual addictive behaviors were found to have higher rates of sexual interest and responsiveness during negative mood states than women (Bancroft & Vukadinovic, 2004). Sexual shame, a negative mood state, was found to create anxiety and discourage healthy sexual activity (Long, Cate, Fehsenfeld, & Williams 1996; Sac, Keller, & Hinkle, 1984 as cited in Quest, Shibley, & DeLamater, 2005), and church doctrine has been blamed, at least in some cases, for being a contributing factor in producing shame and guilt in its church members (Nelson). Men have been found to experience shame and guilt in response to situations that involve feeling physically inadequate, experiencing failures in work, and encountering failure in sexual activity (Efthim, Kenny, & Mahalik, 2001). Men who experienced gender role conflict in relation to expressing emotions tended to have higher levels of shame (Thompkins & Rando, 2003), and men who portrayed more masculine roles preferred to deal with their shame and guilt through action-oriented responses rather than verbally (Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005).

Men who were highly prone to excitation and were not as inhibited by the threat of consequences were also found to have higher rates of sexual addictive behaviors, though this finding was not as strongly supported (Bancroft & Vukadinovic, 2004). In the Catholic religion, it has been argued that the light penance given for sexual sins in confession conveys a “message that all sexual sins [are] both expected and easily

forgiven” (May and Bohman, 1997, p. 141). Because sexual transgressions are officially prohibited but unofficially tolerated and even expected, the effortless forgiveness given to transgressors may allow for further continuance of pathological sexual behavior among many men. In essence, the confessional could be an enabling factor for continued male sexual pathology because the focus of confession is on forgiveness rather than reform (May and Bohman). In the evangelical realm, Jimmy Swaggart, the televangelist whose career ended after the discovery that he was having sex with prostitutes, continually asked for forgiveness after engaging in sexual deviant behavior, developing a repentance and forgiveness cycle that may have allowed him to continue sexually acting out (Seaman, 1999). Dan Scott (2007), an evangelical author, states that religious individuals who sexually act out have a tendency to disconnect themselves from their value system (and its consequences) by dissociating themselves from reality in an effort to rationalize their sexual behavior, perhaps blaming the overpowering influence of the devil or sinful flesh. Sexually deviant behavior is definitive of homosexuality in many evangelical denominations, and homosexuals who are also evangelicals continue to be contentions within the movement. With a large number of evangelicals agreeing upon the notion that homosexuality is an abomination, unique problems arise for evangelical individuals who seek help for sexual addiction and who also happen to be gay. Despite growing liberal evangelical stances, many conservative evangelicals have not affirmed gay culture and have continued to classify homosexual lifestyles as being divergent from biblical doctrine (Robertson, 1982; Dobson, 1982; Thumma, 1991; Chase, 1998; Lienemann, 1998; Scott).

A Heterosexual Stance

Many evangelicals interpret the wording of almost every biblical passage verbatim, and the dominant interpretation from literal biblical understanding is that one cannot be both gay and evangelical (Lienemann, 1998). “It is impossible to be gay and evangelical,” states Gene B. Chase (1997), “because gay is more than just being a sexual orientation” (§ 6). Because homosexuals have an identity as being gay, they affirm homosexual behaviors and attitudes, and because having an evangelical identity requires submission to “the authority of the Bible and certain behaviors and attitudes,” (§ 6) a gay evangelical is a contradiction in terms. For most conservatives, evangelicalism and being gay conflicts on three definitive levels: identity, behavior, and affirmations (Chase, 1998), and so to be evangelical, a gay identity is impossible.

Some evangelicals define homosexuality as a disordered and damaging condition to both the individual and to societal life (Scott, 2007). Loving the sinner, but hating the sin is also often a phrase used among evangelicals when discussing homosexuality (Dobson, 1982). For many evangelicals, being homosexual is not necessarily a sin, but engaging in sexual behaviors very well may be. If homosexuality equals sin in this school of conservative evangelical thought, there is no room for gay evangelicals. Fortunately, for gay individuals who embrace evangelicalism and their gay identity, other viewpoints exist in the evangelical realm (Knitter, 1985). Conservative evangelical viewpoints seem to dominate the current evangelical position. The most recent resignation of Ted Haggard from his position of the National Association of Evangelicals and Reverend Paul Barnes’ resignation from his Denver mega-church, both for homosexual activity, have been modern affirmations of the prominent conservative evangelical stance that gay behavior

equals sin (Banerjee, 2005). Numerous contemporary evangelical organizations that aim to convert homosexuals also continue to emphasize this notion. Historically, gay evangelicals have had few options presented to them. They could join more liberal Christian congregations, they could try to change their homosexual behavior, or they could leave religion behind altogether (Banerjee). Many gay evangelicals have chosen to reconcile their evangelical faith with their gay identity and have been a quintessential part of an emerging and expansive modern tradition: the gay evangelical network.

Homosexual Evangelicals

Evangelicals Concerned, a non-profit organization of “an evangelical network of gay and lesbian evangelicals and friends,” was developed by Ralph Blair in 1976, (Evangelicals Concerned Inc, n.d.). *Good News*, currently disbanded, was specifically developed in 1977 to help individuals reconcile their gay lifestyles with their Evangelical beliefs (Thumma, 1991). Many pro-gay evangelical organizations have followed since. *Evangelical Network*, developed by Fred Patterson in 1988, has organized conferences comprised of numerous gay evangelical speakers in addition to having many other functions in the pro-gay evangelical community (Evangelical Network, Inc., 2008). Patterson’s organization also developed the first pro-gay evangelical Bible school (Chase, 1998). Justin Lee, a self-proclaimed evangelical Christian, developed the website www.gaychristian.net that mostly attracts gay evangelicals (Bannerjee, 2006), and *Soulforce*, an organization which claims religious bigotry as the source of homophobia, was founded by Jerry Falwell’s former seminary professor and ghost writer Reverend Mel White (Soulforce, n.d.).

Despite a growing homosexual evangelical population, most conservative members have not accepted the premise that one can be both gay and evangelical (Thumma, 1991; Chase, 1998; Lienemann, 1998). Many evangelicals are loyal to biblical scripture and take the wording of almost every biblical passage seriously. Consequently, the dominant understanding from literal biblical interpretation fuels the rejection of a pro-gay agenda (Lienemann). In response, gay evangelicals have created separate organizations rather than pushed for change (Banerjee, 2005). Both parties, homosexual and conservative, have continued to speak about the issue rather than speaking to each other, and obstacles have remained unresolved (Lienemann). This current division between the gay evangelical community and the conservative evangelical community presents further difficulty for homosexual evangelicals who seek help with sexual addiction.

Sexual Addiction Help for Homosexual Evangelicals

As mentioned, evangelical Christians who seek help for their sex addiction have a plethora of resources to help them live in a more healthy sexual monogamous relationship with their spouses. Homosexual individuals who embrace their evangelicalism and their gay lifestyle, however, face a significant challenge. There are limited resources to help homosexual evangelicals heal from sexual addiction. However, the number of resources for helping gay individuals heal from their homosexuality is vast; Homosexuals Anonymous (HA) and Exodus International Groups are two such organizations.

Despite the amount of organized groups that claim to reverse homosexuality, the research in measuring success has been weak (Kwee, 2007). In addition, the belief that

same-sex attractions are symptomatic of compulsions or addiction informs thinking and behavior in two ways: Individuals may see their same-sex attractions as unwanted despite not being able to get “well” on their own, and so, they may surrender to self-help structures that keep them dependant in the belief that their “sickness” will continue unless it is contained by that structure. Alternately, individuals may be so threatened about being gay that they hide their homosexuality and split off into behaviors that are viewed as addictive because of the rituals, secrecy, and hiding that it entails. The “relapses” into gay behaviors reinforce the belief that homosexuals are sexual addicts, reinforcing further dependency on self-help groups (Kwee). In such an environment, the stigmatized and prohibited nature of homosexuality leads to secrecy and deception (Brownfain, 1985).

The Fallen

The concept that certain sexual behaviors among evangelicals are problematic continues to be strengthened by ongoing sex scandals of many leading men of the evangelical movement: the alleged affair of televangelist Marvin Gorman with a congregation member in 1986 (Gamson, 2001; Seaman, 1999), exposure of televangelist Jim Bakker’s infidelity, also in 1986 (Seaman), televangelist Jimmy Swaggart’s sexual encounters with a prostitute made public in 1988 (Gamson; Seaman), evangelist, comedian, and self-proclaimed former satanist, Mike Warnke’s uncovered affairs in 1991 (Shupe, 1995), Assemblies of God pastor Frank Houston’s confession in 2000 about past sexual activities with a teenage boy (Prasch, 2008), former president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) Ted Haggard’s affair with a male prostitute exposed in 2006 (Gallagher, 2006), Paul Barnes’s confession and resignation due to homosexual acts similar to Haggard’s in 2006 (Gorski, 2008), and Assemblies of God general

superintendent Wayne Hughe's charge of sexual activity with a teenager in 2007 (Prasch, 2008).

The growing number of sex scandals pertaining to influential evangelical men may have characterized evangelicalism as a hypocritical institution within popular culture (Gamson, 2001). Sex scandals are often assumed to be tales of individual transgressions that serve as reminders of normal sexual arrangements, but research has found that these scandals historically become characterizations of the organization in which the scandal unfolded. Ironically, in a highly individualized American culture, personal sexual sins end up serving as examples of institutional pathologies (Gamson). Much of this reversal of focus is due to journalists' push to report "hard" news rather than "soft" news while still keeping a large reading audience (Gamson). In recent years, mainstream media have been compared to tabloids due to increased reports about celebrity news and other media scandals. In an effort to focus on "hard" news while still enticing readers through the ever-appealing lure of sexual content, mainstream news organizations may frame sex scandals as institutional morality tales. In this way, media can offer audiences a "public service" and establish social significance while still justifying the interest in sex (Gamson). Due to numerous sex scandals among televangelists, the emblematic feature of evangelical institutions may have become hypocrisy.

In 1986, Swaggart exposed Marvin Gorman of having an affair with another pastor's wife, and Gorman was laicized from the Assemblies of God ministry. The following year, Swaggart accused Jim Bakker of sexual indiscretions, appeared on the Larry King Show and called Bakker a "cancer in the body of Christ." A private detective hired by Marvin Gorman found Swaggart in a Louisiana motel on Airline Highway with

a prostitute, Debra Murphree, and took pictures (Giugliano, 1999). The pictures were presented to the Assemblies of God, and Swaggart was suspended from broadcasting for three months. On February 21, 1988, Swaggart tearfully announced on his television broadcast, “I have sinned against You, my Lord. And I would ask that Your precious blood would wash and cleanse every stain, until it is in the seas of God's forgetfulness, never to be remembered against me anymore” (Swaggart, 1988, ¶ 12). The Assemblies of God eventually removed Swaggart of his credentials and ministerial license. On October 11, 1991, Swaggart was found with another prostitute, Rosemary Garcia (Seaman, 1999). The actions of Swaggart and other evangelical individuals who have been caught and exposed in the public arena closely parallel one particular human defense mechanism first discussed by Sigmund Freud: reaction formation.

Reaction formation is a defense mechanism in which emotions that produce anxiety or are deemed unacceptable are replaced by opposite emotions, often leading to obsessional behavior (Freud, 1905/2000). According to Freud, homophobia is indicative of a self-identified heterosexual with homosexual desires. The reaction balances the ego-id-superego emotion of a homosexual individual living as a self proclaimed heterosexual in an attempt to relieve the individual's anxiety (Freud, 1905/2000). Researchers vindicated this theory when they tested a group of 35 homophobic men and 29 non-homophobic men and found that only the homophobic men were physically aroused by male homosexual stimuli (Adams, Wright, & Lohr, 1996). The same argument could also be made for evangelicals who feel that their sexual desires are unacceptable because of their religious beliefs.

A man like Jimmy Swaggart, an evangelical Christian who finds certain sexual behaviors sinful in the eyes of God (in this case, adultery) and finds himself consistently aroused by those sexual behaviors (being with prostitutes), could parallel reaction formation by being very critical of adulterers (Gorman and Baker). He may sacrifice many things in his life, perhaps neglecting his marriage for the ministry (this was often a complaint of Swaggart's wife (Seaman, 1999)), in an attempt to immerse himself in a fight against adulterous behavior. This fight may eventually become an obsession, but the relief he feels is temporary because the arousal to the unacceptable sexual behaviour never disappears. In turn, the unacceptable arousal in reaction formation continues to motivate the implementation of the defense mechanism, causing a cyclical pattern. Despite the process of reaction formation being a purely individual defense mechanism, mass mediated scandal stories have continued to focus on a hypocritical evangelical establishment rather than attributing sex scandals stories to specific transgressing evangelical people (Gamson, 2001).

Within the reaction formation parallel is also an escape from responsibility. By inundating oneself in the spiritual domain, individuals can momentarily escape the moral dilemmas of their lives. In addition, the intent to escape responsibility can also be evidenced in people praying to God to change who they are, not taking responsibility for their actions because of the belief that God made them this way, and therefore, they are powerless. Sartre (1943/1984) posits that "nothing foreign had decided how we feel, what we live, or what we are," (p. 708) so it is senseless to complain, or in the evangelical man's realm, it may be senseless to pray for change. Despite Sartre's atheistic posture, even if God was the deciding power of human destiny, the concept of free will continues

to emerge in the Christian understanding of God, and thereby Sartre's argument of personal responsibility cannot be ignored, foreign influence or not. Everything that happens to a person happens through that person and personal choice is inescapable. Choices are ever-present through every personal exchange and consequence, and even in avoiding responsibility, one is choosing and must own that choice, and often that happens because "most of the time we flee anguish in bad faith" (Sartre, p. 711).

The understanding of the evangelical male who identifies as a sexual addict cannot be achieved through mere compartmentalized descriptions of drives, instincts, and conditioned responses. Psychoanalytic language can often constrain understanding of certain phenomena. In the case of sexuality, the majority of issues is not specific to sexuality but is indicative of who the person is as a human being and what the environment is in which this person exists (Sartre, 1943/1984). Individuals with sexual issues strive for wholeness and that striving is ontological rather than sexual; they desire "a healing of the rupture of existence, [and there is a] dualism of self and body, self and other, [and] self and world" (Becker, 1973, p.225). Psychoanalysis often diminishes the concept of love by dwelling on sexual drives and, in consequence, misses the human elements of sexual disorders or perversions (Boss, 1949). Therefore, from the existential-phenomenological perspective, the understanding of the evangelical male who identifies as a sexual addict is approached by not only addressing sexual behaviors and drives but, also by focusing on the person's mode of existing, which is inclusive of thinking patterns, relationships, and meanings, understanding that the human animal is, at all times, a corporeal (lived body), temporal (lived time), spatial (lived space), and relational (lived human relation) being (Van Manen, 1997).

Existential-Phenomenological inquiry is designed to go back to the source in an effort to understand a phenomenon, in this case, the lived experience of individual evangelical men who also happen to be sexual beings. This study is grounded in an Existential-Phenomenological framework and the following section outlines the theory of this qualitative analysis.

Existential-Phenomenology

Primary to phenomenology is the principle of going “back to the ‘things themselves’” (Husserl 1970/1900 as cited in Giorgi, 1985, p. 7), which implies the necessity for phenomenological researchers to study the “every day world where people are living through various phenomena in actual situations” (Giorgi, p. 7). A phenomenon is simply “that which shows itself from itself” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 51). Phenomena are experienced and are independent of “presuppositions, explanations, and theories” (Cohn, 1994, p. 700). Despite the knowledge that trees are actually compositions of atoms and molecules, neither atoms nor molecules appear when one walks through the park and sees trees. Rather, one experiences the phenomenon of a tree as the tree of one’s lived experience (Wrathall, 1993). The tree shows itself from itself rather than from a scientific molecular viewpoint. Quite literally, phenomenology is the study of phenomena, and “phenomenology requires us to stick with the things that appear in experience and learn to see them in such a way that they show up as they really are” (Wrathall, p. 9). Human existence is the specific focus of existentialism because humans are able to reflect on *that* they are, *what* they are, and what they *do*, where “the ‘mere’ existence of animals, plants, and stones do not allow this” kind of reflection (Cohn, 1994, p. 700). And so,

quite simply, the aim of Existential-Phenomenology is to understand the phenomenon of human existence.

In Existential-Phenomenological research, the primary concern is to illuminate the phenomenon or essence of the lived human experience while preserving the intrinsic human concepts of materialism and spiritualism (Luijpen & Koren, 1969). In materialism, human beings are understood to be the results of “cosmic processes and forces, just as things are results of cosmic processes and forces” (Luijpen & Koren, p.22). Human existence depends solely on matter within this philosophy, and scientism is a primary example of monistic materialistic thought. Spiritualism realizes the importance of the subject of the *I*, though, in spiritualistic monism, material things are reduced to “mere contents of consciousness” (Luijpen & Koren, p. 26), as is the case with Descartes’ philosophy of the primacy of thought; “cogito, ergo sum” or “I think, therefore, I am.” Existential-Phenomenological thought encompasses both schools of thought while avoiding amplification of either concept. Human beings are indeed subjective but only on the basis of matter, and so they are existent subjects rather than absolute subjects. There is no being without a “being-in-the-world” because individuals are always inherently “there” in the world and in the circumstances of existence (Heidegger, 1927/1962). In this study, Evangelical Christian men are understood as subjective beings who are solely responsible for their choices, yet, because these men are inextricably linked to the world, their choices are inherently influenced by that world.

Bias and the Problem of Bracketing

Bias, a significant concern in qualitative research, is shaped by individuals’ “‘common sense’ preunderstandings, suppositions, assumptions, and the existing bodies

of scientific knowledge” (Van Manen, 1990. p. 46). “Bracketing,” a Husserlian concept of phenomenological reduction in which one disconnects from preconceived notions in an attempt to defend the “objectivity of interpretation against the self-interest of the researcher” (Koch, 1995, p. 829) is problematic for this researcher.

Because people are inextricably linked to the world in which they live, they are not just being but always being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Therefore, departing from Husserl (1929/1960), individuals cannot, even momentarily, suspend their beliefs or “bracket” any experience. We are “thrown” into a situation and we find ourselves engaging. The world and our being are inextricably linked, so there is no being without a “being-in-the-world.” We are always “there” in the world and in the circumstances of existence. Pre-reflective in nature, individuals live their meanings before these meanings are consciously recognized (Heidegger). “First of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and only afterwards, defines himself” (Sartre, 1965/1993, p. 35). And so, human beings always come into a situation with a “fore-conception” (Heidegger, 1927/1962) or a prior understanding. All assertions of knowledge come from prior understanding, or a given set of fore-structures, that cannot be removed but can be changed and modified (Koch, 1995, p 832).

Meaning is never completely neutral and unsullied because the researcher brings individual background expectations and meanings to the act of understanding, which can never be forgotten, overlooked, or bracketed (Koch, 1995). This situation seems problematic considering that there is no ideal objectivity due to the inherent situated nature of the researcher. However, understanding or interpreting is not dependant on a

correct procedure; rather, it is dependant on the essential and unavoidable hermeneutic circle.

The Hermeneutic Circle

In hermeneutic reflection, Heidegger does not set out to prove that there is a hermeneutic circle but to present that this circle has ontological constructive significance. The final line of reasoning in all scientific inquiry is still “an illusion that must be resisted” (Packer & Addison, 1989, p. 35). When trying to understand a text, a researcher is always projecting because particular expectations are already present in regard to a certain meaning. This “fore-conception,” however, is constantly revised as the researcher continues to understand what is being presented. The key is to focus on the things themselves, which is a constant task and to concentrate on the focal point throughout all the constant distractions that originate in the interpreter. Through this process, the interpreter’s “fore-conceptions” are exchange for more suitable comprehensions (Gadamer, 1975/2004).

Interpretation is not a method where the researcher can start out with no personal conceptions because they could have been put aside through the process of “bracketing” (Husserl, 1929/1960). Interpretation is a revisionary process. Every revision of the fore-conception is capable of projecting before itself a new projection of meaning. Competing projections can surface alongside each other until it becomes clearer what the agreement of meaning is. The modified nature of understanding and interpretation is created by the constant process of renewed projection (Gadamer, 1975/2004).

The researcher must make personal biases explicit, anticipating projections in the quest for understanding. The only objectivity that exists is the confirmation that the

“fore-meaning” is being worked out (Gadamer, 1975/2004). Assuming the arbitrariness of meanings inherent for each person (fore-meanings) is detrimental because the researcher first approaches descriptions solely reliant on the fore-meanings presently available. Therefore the researcher must first examine if personal meanings are legitimate in relation to the account being analyzed (Gadamer).

In understanding personal meanings as non-arbitrary factors, researchers do not fuse themselves to their own fore-meanings if they seek to understand the meanings of others. The researcher must be aware of personal bias, “so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against [the interpreter’s] own fore-meanings” (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 272).

The circularity of this process lies in that the interpreter understands in the context of what is already personally known. This circle is essential and unavoidable in the course of understanding because there is always movement from the object trying to be understood to personal understandings and back to the object, and “every separate step [of understanding] that we attempt circles in this circle” (Heidegger, 1971/2005, p. 18). The circularity of understanding is that the each person understands in terms of what he or she already knows (Packer & Addison, 1989). Even questioning carries certain presumptions that direct the query. In developing a question people presuppose “something which only the answer can bring” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 27).

Quantitative analysis is not free of bias either because of its inherent human dynamic. Despite the mathematical nature of reliability, validity, and generalizability of this analysis, it contains the human element, and thus, is always biased. The objectivity of a scale used to measure the validity of a value becomes problematic after investigating

how a scale is measuring what it claims to measure. The first scale that is developed to measure a value must be measured against something. For example, if a researcher wants to research the satisfaction of fatherhood and finds there is no scale to measure this value, one is developed. In order to prove that the newly developed scale is valid, the researcher must compare the results of fatherhood satisfaction with the true value of fatherhood satisfaction. The true value, however, is not known. In order for a precise true value to be known, a researcher would already need to possess a valid scale. This is a problem since a valid scale is what is needed to be developed. Because there is no way to develop a valid scale for the first time because there is nothing to validate it against, absolute objectivity is impossible (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Since all science is mediated by subjective beings, absolute objectivity in any discipline is impossible. And so, in qualitative research, researchers limit subjectivity by always regarding data in the context of life events while clearly and consistently identifying both the subjects' and the researcher's perceptions.

CHAPTER III:

Methods

The purpose of this investigation is to examine the lived experiences of evangelical Christian men who self-identify as sexual addicts. The investigative approach of this study is qualitative and the existential-phenomenological methodology used is grounded in Heideggarian (1927/1962) philosophy while the data analysis is adapted from Giorgi's (1985) and Van Manen's (1990) approaches. Unlike quantitative research methods, which are hypothesis-testing, qualitative research methods are hypothesis-generating. Qualitative research questions do not presume *a priori* knowledge about a set of variables because not enough is known about the variables so a hypothesis cannot be constructed from this knowledge. Qualitative investigations do not identify variables and test hypotheses but explore phenomena within a particular context, later generating hypotheses. Unlike quantitative research, the aim is not to *prove* or *disprove* a hypothesis but to provide information. Specifically, qualitative researchers aim to illuminate phenomena and what meanings they have for people (Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y.S., 1998).

In this chapter, research methods and instrumentation, sampling, recruitment, research design, data analysis, and limitations of the study are illustrated. The investigation took place in a private setting with a number of Evangelical Christian men who self-identified as sexual addicts.

Methods and Instrumentation

This qualitative investigation relied on individual interviews and researcher observations as the qualitative methods of gathering data. Verbal interviews were chosen

over written descriptions in order to avoid responses “of a distant and highly reflective nature” (Kruger, 1988, p. 151). Spoken interviews allowed subjects to be as close as possible to their lived experiences, enable dialogue during the early phase of research, and permit spontaneity of expression (Kruger, 1988).

Individual Interviews and Follow-Up Interviews

It was inevitable that many of the descriptions provided in the initial individual interviews would need further extrapolation. Forgetfulness, limited or inferior vocabularies, and limitations in subjects’ fully expressing themselves all contribute to subjects’ deficient explanations (Kruger, 1988, p. 152). Follow-up individual interviews allowed the researcher to clarify the preliminary information gathered or gather additional data that may not have been expressed in the initial interview. After the researcher’s first reflection on the data, something relevant was often discovered where further clarification was needed, and the clarifications were obtained through follow-up interviews. The data were then further analyzed until the meaning was completely clear (Giorgi, 1985).

Researcher Observations

Because of the inevitable situated nature of every researcher, attempting to be an observer who is distanced from a situation through the process of “bracketing” is missing the point of understanding altogether (Koch, 1995). Observation is participation through which the observer maintains a reflective attitude (Van Manen, 1990). The researcher essentially participates in the making of the data because the hermeneutic circle is an unavoidable concept of the human condition (Heidegger, 1962).

Purposeful Sampling

The logic for sampling purposefully was to select cases which were rich in information in order to attain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002). Subjects participating in this research had to meet four primary criteria. Subjects had to (a) be 18 years of age or older, (b) meet the criteria for evangelical Christians, (c) self-identify as recovering sexual addicts, and (d) use the same language as the researcher (English). The criteria that each man had to meet to qualify as an evangelical Christian for this study were beliefs in: (a) the absolute authority of biblical scripture as a source of knowledge of God and how to live a Christian life, (b) Jesus Christ as God incarnate and the savior of sinful humankind, (c) the lordship of the Holy Spirit, (d) the necessity of personal conversion (being born-again), (e) the need to evangelize both individually and as a church, and (f) the importance of the communion of Christians for spiritual sustenance, fellowship, and development. These questions were used during the screening interview and were based on subject self-report.

Identifying the Subjects

The subjects who were identified as having insight into the phenomenon being investigated were men who identified as sexual addicts and evangelical Christians who were also affiliated with a recovery effort such as Sexaholics Anonymous or an accountability group, such as Every Man's Battle or Promise Keepers. Because phenomenological reflection requires the person to be retrospective rather than introspective, men who were in recovery from and not engaging in active sexual addiction were chosen. For the purpose of this study, recovery is defined as the experience through which individuals utilize internal and external resources to voluntarily

resolve their problems caused by addiction and actively manage their continued vulnerability to such problems (White, 2007). Because it would be impossible to reflect on experiences while actively living through them, setting the criterion of recovery was vital. The element of subjects' involvement in a 12 step recovery group has a paradoxical value in this research. It is an asset because subjects are consistently reflecting on their past experiences, yet it is of concern because of the separate jargon and culture that subjects acquire through the 12 step experience. This concern is addressed in the Data Analysis section under *Concerns in the Analysis*. Due to the male focus of this study, only men were invited to participate in the interviews.

Recruitment

Recruitment for this research required this researcher to use personal contacts associated with Sexaholics Anonymous in order to attain subjects.

Recruiting Subjects

1. This researcher used two personal contacts who were affiliated with Sexaholics Anonymous. The first personal contact helped this researcher recruit participants from his involvement with Sexaholics Anonymous, and the other personal contact connected this researcher with a man who was very involved with leading evangelical sexual addiction groups.
2. A written description of the research in a flyer form was given to the initial personal contact and to the evangelical group-leader who this researcher was connected with. The flyer outlined the description of the study, the criteria required of subjects, the qualitative approach of this research, and the requirement

- of participation in two interviews. Applicants who met the criteria were welcomed to contact the researcher from the contact information provided on the flyer.
3. The personal contact and group-leader distributed the flyers and informed possible candidates about the study.
 4. Applicants who felt like they met the criteria and were interested in participating or needed more information about the study were asked to contact the researcher from the contact information that was provided on the flyer.
 5. Interested subjects contacted the researcher via phone or e-mail.
 6. The researcher screened each applicant to establish that each criterion for participation was met. The initial plan was to have subjects participate in a focus group interview, and this was specified on the flyer. All the men who participated preferred to participate in individual interviews rather than a focus group interview. This adjustment was made for all participants. After discussing the parameters of the study, the researcher asked each individual if he was interested in participating. The applicant was also informed that a written consent form would be provided at the interview and that he could choose to not participate in the study at any time.
 7. After each applicant met all criteria and agreed to participate in the study, the researcher discussed possible dates and times for the interview and scheduled the interview in a confidential space.

Greeting the Subject

This researcher met each subject for the scheduled interview, and the parameters for participation were once again reviewed, demographic data was gathered, and the

consent form was signed by the subject. Follow-up individual interviews were conducted within a week of the researcher transcribing and coding the data for preliminary meaning units. All interviews were audio-tape recorded and transcribed.

Research Design

This investigation was designed to highlight important aspects of this phenomenon as lived and experienced. The purpose was to do justice to the *lived* aspects of human phenomenon, and, in order to accomplish this, an exploration of how people actually experienced the phenomenon being researched was the focus. Descriptions of these lived experiences were necessary in order to avoid indirect methods of exploration (Giorgi, 1985). Two tasks took priority in this research design: (a) providing results in a particular problem area where research was needed and (b) supplying greater concreteness and specificity of the methodological system (Wertz, 1985).

Data Collection

A semi-structured interview was used for the initial individual interviews in order to allow for the required disciplined spontaneity aspect of phenomenological inquiry (Giorgi, 1985). Follow-up individual interviews were employed to fill in any gaps in the information. Gaps consisted of either omitted data or areas that were left implicit or incomplete (perhaps the subject was interrupted or he did not finish a story or a point he was making) (Giorgi). This method of data collection initially allowed the lived sense of these circumstances to spontaneously operate (via the initial interview) and only later assessed descriptions more specifically (Giorgi). The initial individual interviews, follow-up interviews, and the researcher's observations provided the primary methods of data collection.

Each subject was informed of the potential benefits and hazards of participating in this study and provided written consent for participating. Confidentiality was protected by giving each subject a code (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, and S6). These codes were used in the analysis of data, and this researcher was the only individual aware of the subjects' identities and their related codes.

Interview Questions

After a brief introduction about the focal point of the research, the subjects were asked to describe their lived experiences as if to someone who had never heard of sexual addiction.

The queries that framed the discussion were:

1. Describe the nature of your sexual addiction.
2. Has your religion had an impact on your sexual addiction?
3. If not, discuss how your religion has remained separate from your sexual addiction.
4. If so, give an example of a time where your religion had an impact on your sexual addiction.
5. Has your religion had an impact on your views about sexuality?
6. If not, give examples of how your religion remained separate from your views about sexuality.
7. If so, give an example of a time where your religion had a helpful impact on your views about sexuality.
8. If so, give an example of a time where your religion had a harmful impact on your views about sexuality.

Follow-Up Questions

After the individual interview, this researcher transcribed and reviewed the written transcription. Follow-up questions were specified when this researcher found gaps in the information. Gaps were areas that this researcher identified as omitted, unstated, or incomplete information. The follow-up questions were formulated for each subject solely based on the gaps in the descriptions given. The questions were written down by the researcher and used for each follow-up interview.

Data Analysis

Analysis began as soon as the data were gathered and continued until the process was completed. The subjects' descriptions of their experiences were the primary data studied. From the individual descriptions, the researcher derived universal meanings or the essences of the experiential structures (Moustakas, 1994). This researcher also clarified personal presumptions and biases in order to shield hypercritical approaches of the data.

For this study, the guiding theme for the analysis was what meanings evangelical beliefs about sexuality had for evangelical men who identified as sexual addicts. The descriptions about the connections these men had with their evangelical belief system and their understanding of sexuality provided access into the lived-world of the evangelical sexually addicted male. An explanation of the illustrated steps of analysis adapted from Giorgi (1985) and Van Manen (1990) are clarified below through examples from the collected data.

Illustrated Steps

The first step in this method was reading the entire transcript of the individual interview in order to get a sense of the entire description. After reading the entire transcript, the researcher broke down the elements into preliminary “meaning units,” (Giorgi, 1985, p. 10) focusing on the topic being investigated; the evangelical male’s experience of sexuality in an evangelical lived world. A meaning unit is the delineated portion of the data that is identified as revealing a characteristic of the phenomenon under investigation. An example of the two preliminary units is illustrated from S1’s description. The first meaning unit describes S1’s disappointment about the sex in his marriage while the second meaning unit describes S1’s expectation that sex would be like the sexual fantasies he created from pornography and television.

- 1) *“Intimacy with her wasn’t what I thought it was going to be. At least from a physical stand point.”*
- 2) *“All of a sudden this fantasy and this image and the projection that you think is rightfully yours that you’re going to get from your spouse doesn’t materialize. It just wasn’t the ideal, what you expect, you know, dirty, whatever you want, and kind of just no holds barred.”*

After this step, additional data needed to be obtained through follow-up individual interviews. The researcher identified any gaps in the data (missing information or unclear statements) given from the original transcript and formulated interview questions for each subject. The researcher interviewed each subject for further description of each gap identified. The individual interview was then transcribed, read over by the researcher, and integrated into the original analysis of meaning units. This is the Edited Synthesis

(Coufal, 1996), which also involves the deletion of any irrelevant information, such as repetitive statements that were not necessary for analyzing the data. An example of the Edited Synthesis is provided and illustrates this researcher's aim to identify a gap of information pertaining to "getting disgusted with myself." From this statement, the researcher seeks to clarify what S2 means by being disgusted with himself as it could mean many things. The statements printed in bold font were obtained in the follow-up interview to clarify S2's initial statement.

*S2: One woman that was a wife of a friend would have inappropriate communications with me, and it would start out with, "Hey, how's the kids? What's going on?" whether it was a chat or an email or whatever, and it would always turn to a sexual nature, and I would usually get disgusted with myself and shut it off. **I think when you talk to sexual addicts, particularly those who are believers, you're not happy with yourself. There are some people that live in this lifestyle, and this is what they want, but for me, any event would bring guilt and shame.***

I: You would feel guilt and shame because of your religious beliefs?

S2: Absolutely, yes. I was wanting to be righteous, and I was wanting to be a good husband. I was wanting to be a good father. With this particular person, even though I came clean with everything else years ago, this particular person was someone who was in the dark. I allowed that situation to stay in the dark, and it caused me guilt and shame and anger.

Once the Edited Synthesis was completed, it was broken down into final meaning units, which was informed by the researcher's deepened sense of the entire description. To understand this step, the reader can refer to the Edited Synthesis example above. The

initial understanding was that S2 would get disgusted with himself for his sexual behavior, but after the clarification of the follow-up interview, the researcher understood that S2 was disgusted with himself about his behavior because he felt guilty due to his religious beliefs. Next, the researcher rewrote the final meaning units of each subject's description in order to shift the point of view of the interview from a personal to a more general explanation. The following part of S2's description illustrates this step.

Because of S2's evangelical faith, his sexual behavior would end up bringing about guilt and shame. He wanted to be righteous and to be a good husband and father.

Rewriting the meaning units in psychological terms was the next major step. The term "psychological" is utilized within an existential-phenomenological framework, and issues of personal meaning and worth are the focus. A word such as "self-reflection" may not have been used by a specific subject but may be introduced in order to provide a psychological understanding of the description. The following example illustrates S3's original description and the description written in third person using psychological language.

- 1) When there were times of either viewing pornography or of fantasy, it was just the way of not having to think. I call it noise, in a way. Anything to avoid really getting to what I'm all about.*
- 2) For S3, viewing pornography and engaging in sexual fantasy were ways of not having to think and avoiding self-reflection.*

The rewritten meaning units were then synthesized into a description of each subject's experience as an entire thematic description. This Situated Narrative (Coufal, 1996) was a retelling of each subject's story where details and events were organized,

and the meanings of each subject's experience with sexuality in an evangelical framework were highlighted thematically. The following is an example of this step. The themes, represented in bold font, head each of S4's analyses.

Unrealistic Expectations about Sex

When he thought about sex, he thought, "This is going to be great. This is going to be someone who will meet my needs whenever I want." He had an unrealistic expectation of what a true intimate relationship was and did not understand true intimacy.

S4 used to think that a relationship was primarily a sexual relationship and that it would satisfy his needs. Right after he got married, he was disappointed about sex with his wife because he felt like it was not ever enough.

Initial Trouble in Marriage

He felt inadequate about how to deal with himself, and his wife was dealing with personal issues created from her family upbringing, and so two unprepared, not well adjusted people came together to create a marriage.

Their relationship was problematic to begin with because they both had emotional problems that they brought with them from childhood that prevented them from becoming strong, confident, and stable adults. They were both prone to tempers, outbursts, irrational, and angry behavior.

A General Narrative (Coulal, 1996) was created from the Situated Narratives where the accounts of the subjects were unified into a general description of subject's narratives about being evangelical Christian men who identify as sexual addicts. The focus of this step was to collectively organize the data from the Situated Narratives,

jointly highlighting the meanings of the subjects' experiences. The following section of the General Narrative illustrates this step.

All subjects experienced a disconnection with one parent, and most of the subjects discussed a significant disconnection with their fathers. It was through counseling and support groups that subjects recognized the effects of the disconnections they had with their parents. At the time that they occurred, their experiences gave them feelings of inadequacy. Most subjects used sexual behaviors as a way to feel better about themselves or to feel affirmed as men.

Subsequently, a Reflection was written on the General Narrative where the major themes were elucidated. Themes were clarified and then further elucidated using corporeal (lived body), temporal (lived time), spatial (lived space), and relational (lived human relation) reflections (Van Manen, 1997). In corporeal reflection, the researcher of this study looked at sexual arousal as one aspect of being bodily in the world. How the past (evangelical teachings) molds the present (current beliefs about sexuality) was considered in temporal reflection. Spatial reflection guided the researcher to ponder on the evangelical church community as the spatial dimensions of the subjects' landscape and where they found themselves at home. How others or how the religious experience affected subjects or gave them purpose was a focus in relational reflection. Within this Reflection, the researcher was not only clarifying themes but producing a critical analysis of the evangelical male sex addict's worldview. Sections are provided from each reflective process to illustrate this step.

Corporeal Reflection (Lived Body)

Through various points in their lives, subjects described a conflict between their bodies and their faith. Sexual arousal was pleasurable physically and, at the same time, distressing for subjects because of their spiritual beliefs.

Temporal Reflection (Lived Time)

All subjects' childhood experiences shaped how they engaged with others in their adulthood. S1 felt inadequate as a son his sense of inadequacy and his continued sense of not feeling that he was good enough urged him to find validation in sexual affairs. If he could find the ideal woman to love him, he would be affirmed and would no longer identify with the boy of his past.

Spatial Reflection (Lived Space)

All subjects created separate spaces for their sexual lives, their spiritual lives, and their marital lives. When subjects were traveling for work or were able to get some time by themselves where they were separate from church and family life, that created freedom to sexually gratify themselves outside of the expectations of religious morality.

Relational Reflection (Lived Human Relation)

Subjects experienced conflicted family events during their childhood. S1, S2, S3, S4, and S6 all had absent fathers and S1 and S2 felt a void due to their absent fathers while S3 and S4 felt anger about their fathers' separation and behaviors.

The final step of the analysis was the General Structure (Coufal, 1996) which moved away from the everyday perspectives of the subjects. The focus of the researcher was to discuss the existential-phenomenological themes that were implicit in the specifics of all of the subjects' descriptions of their experiences. The aim was to unite the major existential-phenomenological themes into a cohesive general description of the

evangelical self-identified sexually- addicted male. The following section of the General Structure exemplifies this final stage.

The evangelical self-identified sexual addict lives through compartmentalized worlds: the religious or spiritual world, the committed relationship or marital world, and the sexual world. Sexual expression is initially understood through a regimented outlook which produces a conflicted sexual exploration phase. To deal with the opposing concepts of biological urges and spiritual sexual purity expectations, self-identified sexual addicted evangelical males divide those worlds into alternative parts of their lives that they continue to interchange.

On Reflection

As the researcher reflects on corporeal, temporal, spatial, and relational themes and turns narratives into units of meaning, a fundamental posture or attitude is followed (Wertz, 1985). The five aspects of reflections developed by Wertz are outlined below and are neither linear in nature nor separate from each other. Instead, they overlap and profoundly involve each other. In reflecting on the data the researcher:

1. Immerses in the descriptive world in an empathic way. That is, the researcher lives through the subjects' descriptions as if they were her own.
 2. Slows down and dwells on each narrative. The researcher does not pass over the details of the account as if she understands it already but dwells upon the details of each situation described.
 3. Magnifies and amplifies each situation. Each description, even what may be a minute explanation for the subject, is of great importance to the researcher.
- The researcher must transcend the mundane nature of each description.

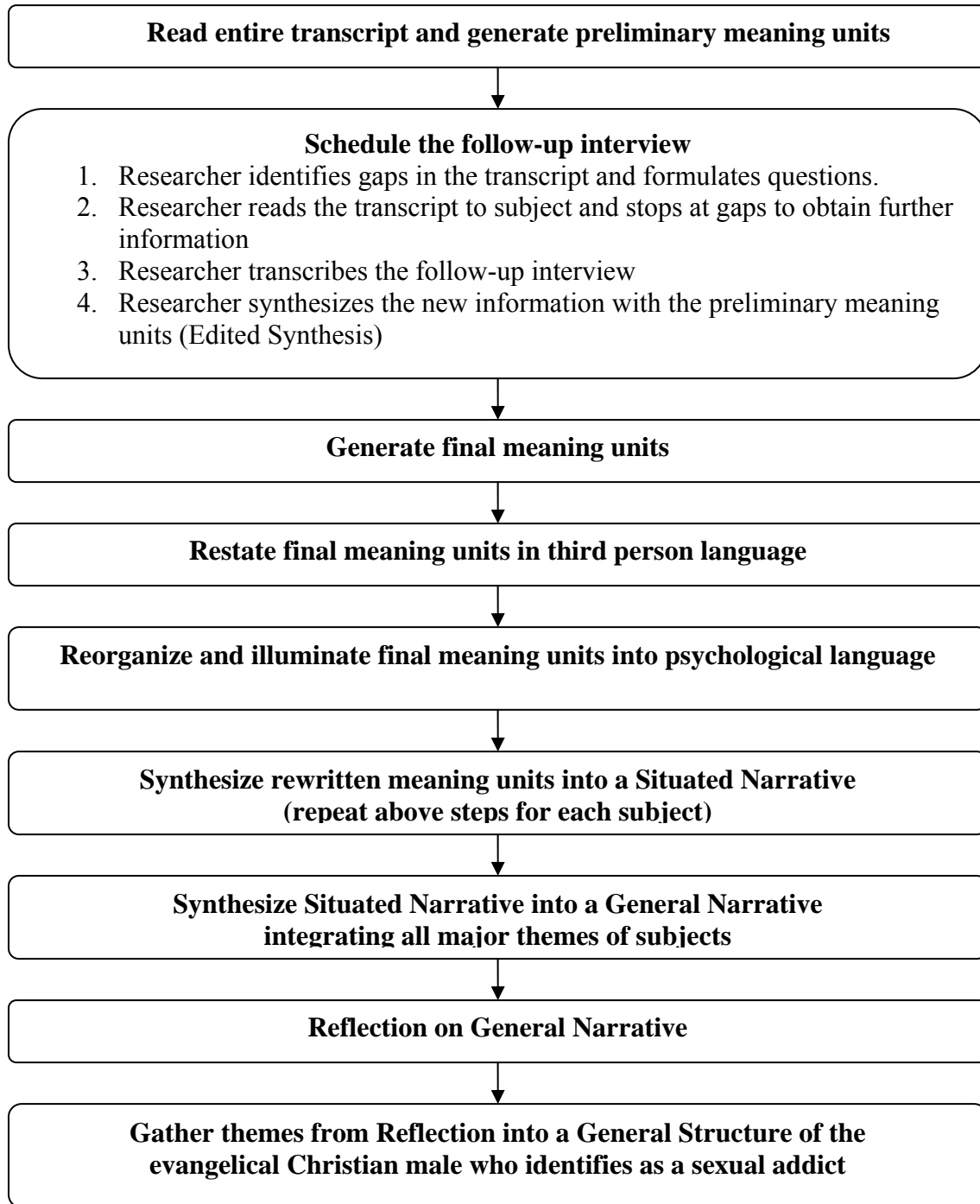


Figure 2. Flow Chart of Data Analysis

4. Breaks the initial fusion with the subject (immersion) and takes up an intense interest in the origin, interactions, and general structure of the subject's lived

experience. Where is the subject? How did he get there? What does it mean to be there?

5. Makes meaning. The facts of the accounts are turned into what those accounts mean for the subject and how the “particular participation in terms of which such meanings arise” (p. 175).

Concerns in the Analysis

The first major concern in analyzing the data was that was subject’s involvement in a 12 step program and the influences of that program on subjects’ descriptions. The second major concern was errors in interpretation due to bias and misunderstanding language.

On the Subjects

The influence of the subjects’ involvement in a 12 step support group had to be considered. This researcher had to be aware of the conceptual language evident in 12 step recovery culture that may not have integrated with the rest of the accounts. Examples of words and phrases are: turning it over, letting it go, doing the next best thing, and being accountable. In the data analysis, these statements were viewed as secondary because this researcher was more interested in the lived experience of the subjects remembered in non-technical terms. If subjects used the 12 step vernacular, the researcher asked them to describe what they meant when they used the 12 step jargon. This elaboration was particularly important when subjects described specific lived experiences.

On Interpretation

The meaning units exist only in relation to the researcher in that the purpose shifts from *description* to *meaning*. One can compare this shift to analyzing a text in a grammatical way versus a stylistic way. The purpose is different, seen through a different lens. The shift from an every day mode to an existential-phenomenological mode depends heavily on the researcher's perspective (Giorgi, 1985). The vulnerability of subjective interpretation to inaccuracy, therefore, was a significant factor. Misconstrued language and biases, two primary liabilities in interpretation, are substantiated below.

Bias

In hermeneutic reflection, the researcher concentrates on the focal point (the data) throughout all the constant distractions and biases that are constantly create within. The goal is to replace the researcher's current conceptions with more suitable ones through reflection (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 269). Interpretation does not depend on the process of "bracketing" (Husserl, 1929/1960) because interpretation is a process that necessitates revising and personal biases create the questions necessary for thought revision. Every revision of a pre-conception is capable of projecting a new projection of meaning. Competing projections can surface alongside each other until it becomes clearer what the agreement of meaning is (Gadamer, 1975/2004). In the situation illustrated below, S6 discussed his frustration over his sexual behaviors. The researcher's pre-conception was that he felt guilty because of his faith, and that was the bias that directed the clarification question. The new projection of meaning was that he felt guilty because of his inability to stop acting out on his own.

S6: I'd think, I know I can do this. I can take care of this myself. I'd stay sober from masturbation for two weeks and then bang, that's over, that's done with at the sight of a beautiful woman or a new Playboy. So then, it's gone and I'd think, ugh, what'd you do? Well, I better start again, and ten days later it's the same thing again.

I: Did you feel guilty about your behavior because of your faith?

S6: No, it was because I failed, and I could never forgive myself for this whole mess.

The Dilemma of Language

The researcher must be “obsessed by the concrete” in order to understand and then explicate “what was initially perceived” (Kruger, 1988, p. 143). To demonstrate this concept, consider the game of chess. Chess can be described as a game, a sport, a gift, an heirloom, among other descriptions depending on the context. By discussing chess as a sport, a context of competition and risk may come to mind. The word, game, on the other hand, may elude the former context altogether, despite the synonymous grammatical understanding of both (Giorgi, 1985). Subtle nuances in lingual descriptions have the potential to alter meanings. And so, the interpretation of subjects’ descriptions into meaning units, a practice that requires shifts in terminology, must be taken up with great care and attention to detail.

In reflecting on and then interpreting the narrative, the researcher draws on the context of the situation in order to carefully choose dialect to express the meaning unit. Often, a vernacular that is used in narrative must be modified into more explicable dialect, but the researcher must pay great attention to detail in order to interpret the meaning of that vernacular *within the context of the situation*. The context of a situation is crucial in

interpreting phenomena, it guides researcher in staying faithful to “the things themselves” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 153). Consider the following as an example of this process.

A father gives his son a chess set and senses his son’s excitement. The son’s excitement for the chess set, however, is not because he loves chess, but because of the weights contained inside each chess piece. After the father finds out that his son has taken the weights out of each chess piece, he is angry and yells at his son, by which he receives a puzzled response from his son. Later, the father realizes that the chess set he gave his son was not a gift that his young son was able to receive. The chess set, a symbol of sentiment for the father, was only a source of lead weights for his son (Giorgi, 1985).

In the description above, the father describes the excitement of his son about the gift of the chess set, his disappointment about what his son had done to the chess pieces, and the realization of the different meaning of the gift for each. As the researcher reflects, is the mention of *chess* essential? It is apparent that the father valued chess and this tells us something about the father, but “is chess as such absolutely essential to understand the dynamics of learning as presented here?” (Giorgi, 1985, p. 18). The researcher considers the context of the situation in order to make the determination. The central issue was that the son did not use the chess set as the father intended, and so, with respect to the decisive factor, stating that the father gave his son a gift suffices because the “the complexities of chess are not necessary to understand the learning dynamics [of this meaning unit] except in the most incidental way,” so the “gift qualities” rather than the “chess qualities” of the chess set are the foci of this account (Giorgi, p. 18). By depending on the context of the situation and on great attention to detail, the researcher

avoids misinterpreting the meaning of a narrative because of misleading terminology. In the following example, S3 discussed using pornography as a good escape from the reality of his home life. But what did “a good escape” mean? In the first statement, “fun” or pleasure defined “a good escape” in S3’s childhood while “stress relief” explained S3’s definition of “a good escape” later in his life.

I was eight or maybe nine years old, and it was just one of those experiences where you just go, “Wow!” It sounds very cliché-ish, but to say that was a good escape from the realities of the things that were happening.

At the time, early on, it was just fun. Later on it became, hey I’m feeling bad and I know a way to make me feel better. It was more about stress relief for me.

Limitations

Bias in the participant sample and research findings may be present due to the data being dependant on a small number of subjects’ personal understandings, reflections, and meanings. Limited generalizability due to a smaller sample is also evident in this study.

Chapter Summary

The methodology of this approach is Existential-Phenomenological because the purpose of this research was to illuminate the lived experiences and meanings of evangelical Christian men who identified as sexual addicts. This design relied on individual interviews, follow-up individual interviews, and a data analysis that was exhaustively focused on context of the lived experience.

CHAPTER IV:

Findings

The findings of this study begin with subjects' demographics. A thematic cross-case analysis (Table 2) of the major themes that emerged is presented next; themes are ordered from most frequent occurrences to the least frequent. Next, the General Narrative of the evangelical Christian man who identifies as a sexual-addict is provided.

Immediately following is an Illustrated General Narrative, which is a repetition of the General Narrative with quotes inserted from the subjects to illustrate each point through the data. The Reflection on the General Narrative follows, providing a thematized description of the evangelical Christian man who identifies as a sexual addict. Finally, the General Structure provides a unification of all the major existential-phenomenological themes in a cohesive general description of the evangelical sexually-addicted male.

Subject's Demographics

The data that were collected came from six subjects who identified as sexually-addicted evangelical Christians who were in recovery. All six subjects opted to participate in an individual interview rather than participating in a focus group. Each initial interview lasted an hour to an hour and a half and the follow-up phone interview did not exceed thirty minutes. All subjects were married heterosexual males, and none had engaged in any homosexual activities. The subjects provided their age, marital status, duration of marriage, duration of being an evangelical Christian, and duration of sexual sobriety (Table 1). S5 was married twice, and both S5 and S6 believed that they lost their initial salvation and had to be re-saved. S1 initially thought that a person had to be re-saved early in his spiritual beliefs and left his faith, but through his growing

understanding of God, he believed that he could not lose his salvation, and so all his years of being an evangelical Christian are represented (Table 1) from the time he was seventeen years old.

Table 1

Subjects' Demographic Data

Subject	Age	Marital Status	Duration of Marriage	Duration of Evangelical Status	Duration of Sexual Sobriety
S1	47	married	25 years	30 years	4.5 years
S2	39	married	20 years	17 years	3.5 years → (relapsed) → 1 week
S3	47	married	20 years	27 years	1.5 years
S4	49	married	23 years	40 years	5 years
S5	70	re-married	10yrs/28yrs	7 years / 28years	1.5 years
S6	69	married	42 years	7years / 5 years	4.5 years

The thematic cross-case analysis table (Table 2) of the major themes that emerged in this study reports themes from most frequent occurrences to the least frequent. The Situated Narratives (provided in Appendix F) present details from each subject's interview and the descriptions follow the same thematic titles as illustrated in the table below. The themes in the Situated Narratives are categorized by time rather than frequency to allow for a temporal reading of the narrative.

General Narrative

The General Narrative of the evangelical Christian man who identifies as a sexual addict was created from the Situated Narratives where the accounts were unified into a

Table 2

Thematic Cross-Case Analysis

Theme	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
Conflicted Childhood	X	X	X	X	X	X
Disconnection from Father or Mother	X	X	X	X	X	X
Initial Sexual Exploration & Action	X	X	X	X	X	X
Separating Married Life from Sexual Life	X	X	X	X	X	X
Separating Religious Life from Sexual Life	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reaction Formation Parallel	X	X	X	X	X	X
Using Sexuality or Fantasy as a Way to Cope	X	X	X	X	X	X
Guilt over Sexual Acts Due to Faith	X	X	X	X	X	X
Guilt over Sexual Acting Out During Marriage	X	X	X	X	X	X
Exposure and Potential Consequences Causing Change	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ongoing Trouble in Marriage	X	X	X	X	X	X
Depending on God/Program Daily	X	X	X	X	X	X
Establishing a Hierarchy in the Marriage	X	X	X	X		X
Continued Struggles in Marriage	X	X	X	X		X
Feeling that Marriage Would Solve Problems	X	X	X	X		X
Using Sex or Relationships as a Way to Feel Affirmed	X	X		X	X	X
Using the Relationship with God as a Rationalization or	X		X	X	X	X
Excuse to Continue or Increase Behavior						
Asking God to Change Him	X	X	X	X	X	
Unrealistic Expectations about Sex	X		X	X		X

Initial Trouble in Marriage	X	X	X	X	
Preoccupation with Sexual Behavior Resulting in it	X		X	X	X
Becoming a Substantial Part of Life					
Messages from God	X	X	X		X
Blaming Spouse	X		X	X	
Initial Role Confusion about Being a Spiritual Leader		X	X	X	
Feeling that Sexual Addiction was God's Will	X		X	X	
No Help from Church		X	X		
Negative Feelings about God	X	X			

general description of subjects' experiences of being evangelical Christian men who identified as sexual addicts. The General Narrative preserves and incorporates all of the subjects' accounts while collectively organizing data from the Situated Narratives and highlighting meanings of subjects' experiences.

All subjects experienced conflicted family events during childhood ranging from emotional abuse to less traumatic distresses. All subjects experienced a disconnection with one parent, and most of the subjects discussed a significant disconnection with their fathers. It was through counseling and support groups that subjects recognized the effects of the disconnections they had with their parents. At the time that they occurred, their experiences gave them feelings of inadequacy. Most subjects used sexual behaviors as a way to feel better about themselves or to feel affirmed as men. All subjects experienced a period of sexual exploration that was guided by their curiosities and excitement about

experiencing their new found sexuality, but none of the subjects mentioned discussing sexual matters with their parents.

As most subjects explored their sexuality through adolescence and into young adulthood, they would simultaneously feel guilty about their behavior because of their Christian faith. While most subjects experienced guilt over their sexual acts, be it masturbation or pre-marital sex, the guilt was not strong enough to distress them enough to stop. Subjects would engage in a sexual act and feel guilt as a residual feeling. Throughout most of their sexual explorations, guilt was something that was consistently present for subjects but never strong enough to become oppressive.

Most subjects who were conflicted over their sexual exploration due to their faith thought that getting married would solve their problems. Subjects thought that their sexual behaviors would stop once they got married or that they would not want to have sex with others because they would have sex with their wives all the time. Some subjects also had unrealistic expectations about sex, which ranged from subjects thinking that they would have sex whenever they wanted once they were married; such fantasy-like expectations of sex were generated through media and pornography.

After subjects got married, problems were usually present from the very beginning between spouses. Initial problems differed among couples from personality conflicts to getting married because of pregnancies to problematic emotional issues. As the couples continued to be married, all subjects experienced increasing problems in their marriages, especially as responsibilities became greater due to children, money, and illnesses. One issue that some subjects experienced was initial confusion over being a spiritual leader; they did not know what it meant and how they should establish that role.

Though not all subjects were initially conflicted, most believed that their role in the household was to lead the family spiritually. Because they were not leading the family in the prescribed way or because they did not know how to do it, a contention was consistently present between subjects and their wives on that matter. As the presence of stress in their marriages increased, subjects would use sexual behaviors as a way to cope with their discontented situations. Behaviors differed among all subjects and would range from viewing online pornography to attending strip clubs to utilizing massage parlors to purchasing escort services. Some subjects would plan their days around their sexual behaviors and consistently need to have sexual outlets present to the point where their behaviors became significant elements in their lives. Many subjects traveled, which gave them a sense of freedom to do what they wanted sexually. Others would utilize work time to act out or wait until their spouses were away or asleep to act out.

All subjects felt guilty about their extra-marital sexual behavior. While some initially thought that they were not hurting anybody because they were only engaging in pornography-based sexual behavior, others felt an oppressive sense of guilt for their sexual conduct. To cope, some would blame their wives for their extra-marital activities, often feeling that their wives were not behaving the way that they should and giving them what they needed sexually or emotionally. Some subjects would get angry with God, though most did not have negative feelings about God despite their ongoing prayers to God. Almost all subjects pled with God to change them and take away their sexual temptations. When God did not, subjects dealt with the situation in different ways, but all used their dependence on God as a way to escape responsibility or rationalize their continued sexual behavior. Some subjects relied on God's forgiveness to redeem them

each time they acted out, others felt so overwhelmed by guilt that they felt a need to act out sexually because they were not able to cope, while still others figured that they were going to hell anyway so they may as well do what they wanted in their sinful life. All subjects kept their marriage life and their extra-marital sexual life separate. All would lie to their wives when questioned about suspicious behavior and no subject would divulge information in marriage counseling. Their sexual lives were completely different parts of who they were, and separating the two lives was almost a natural consequence for all subjects.

Subjects' religious lives and sexual lives were also separated. To their church-going friends, subjects' lives seemed perfect. Subjects played the parts of the perfect husbands, perfect fathers, and/or perfect church members. All subjects were very involved in their churches while they were engaging in their extra-marital sexual behaviors and their experiences ranged from being elders to deacons to Sunday school teachers to public speakers. Being involved in the church and being spiritual leaders made many subjects feel good about themselves. While others continued to be conflicted about their guilt as they remained leaders in the church, they remained in their spiritual roles as they engaged in their sexual behaviors. As subjects persisted in separating their spiritual and marital lives from their extra-marital sexual lives, they continued to struggle with guilt, shame, and fear. Most subjects kept their behaviors a secret from everyone until they faced significant consequences. A few sought help from their church leaders but did not feel that they received guidance that helped them in any way, and so they continued their behavior and kept it secret.

All subjects made genuine steps towards significantly changing their behaviors only after they felt exposed and were confronted with consequences that they felt would be considerably harmful to them. During or after confrontation, most subjects felt that God spoke to them and instructed them to change their lives and that they had reached a point in their lives where they needed to make a decision and that decision was to stop their sexual behaviors and honor God. All subjects felt a heavy reliance on God and a recovery program. Marriages continued to be stressful for most subjects due to past behaviors. Many wives continued to have trust issues, and subjects would depend on God to continue to mend their marriages. Most subjects took on more responsibility in their families' duties and worked towards re-establishing their roles as spiritual leaders. Combined with subjects' wives' distrust, some couples also experienced power struggles over the re-establishment of male spiritual leadership. While some subjects felt that their sexual addictions were God's will for their lives, others felt that their struggles shaped them to be better Christians and to be closer to God.

Illustrated General Narrative

The Illustrated General Narrative is a repetition of the General Narrative. Quotes have been inserted from the subjects' interviews in order to illustrate each line of reasoning through the data collected.

All subjects experienced conflicted family events during childhood ranging from emotional abuse to less traumatic distresses.

“When [my father] left, my mother blamed me for the divorce. Said that I was the cause because when I was born, my father loved me and not her anymore.” (S1)

“My mother is on her third marriage. My father and my dad are not the same men. I didn’t learn that until I was in the fifth grade that my dad wasn’t necessarily my father, and that really impacted me.” (S2)

“We got out of the car, and she took off. She left. There’s three boys standing on the street crying. She just drove around the block or something and came back. I look back and I think, that’s horrible! That is horrible! That’s sick thinking. And that’s just one of several things.” (S3)

“[I was] being the pawn being dragged through the court system.” (S4)

“They were in single beds. I could never understand that with my parents. That was strange for me. It just struck me as something that was unusual for a married couple, even as a child.” (S5)

“My older brothers were a year apart, and I was kind of the black sheep of the family, I guess you could put it that way. They were both very bright, valedictorians of their class two years running. I was kind of the hood of the family.” (S6)

All subjects experienced a disconnection with one parent, and most of the subjects discussed a significant disconnection with their fathers.

“[I tried] to please him and be what I could for him, and then when he up and left us, it was a huge void for me.” (S1)

“In my senior year of high school, my mom and dad divorced and he separated, and it became that much harder. I was older. I was busy. He was busy. He would make time for the younger siblings. It wasn’t as much of an expectation for me.” (S2)

“In between when my dad left and high school, there was very little contact between my dad and I. If I had never seen him again, it would have been just fine with me.” (S3)

“I haven’t seen him since I was probably ten or eleven, so it’s been a complete separation. It was a terrible break-up between my mom and my dad, and out of respect for my mom who sacrificed everything, I didn’t want a relationship with my dad.” (S4)

“She was very prim and proper, and I don’t really know if she ever wanted to talk about things to me. She never really presented to me that she wanted to talk about stuff.” (S5)

“I didn’t see my dad much because he worked. My mom was a little tough because she had to be. She was a little bit harsh when I was younger. I saw my dad on the weekends. He worked second shift, so through the week, I didn’t see a lot of him.” (S6)

It was through counseling and support groups that subjects recognized the effects of the disconnections they had with their parents. At the time that they occurred, their experiences gave them feelings of inadequacy. Most subjects used sexual behaviors as a way to feel better about themselves or to feel affirmed as men.

“I was always looking for a woman that was going to satisfy me physically, mentally, and emotionally.” (S1)

“As I moved from woman to woman or conquest to conquest, that helped me identify as a man for just mere seconds.” (S2)

“I was hooked on those images of women that gave me a sense of the unconditional love that I so desperately desired.” (S4)

“If I get told that I didn’t do something right, that bothers me. That triggers feelings of low self-esteem and triggers me to act out to bolster me up ... because you’re using something else to bolster you. In a strip club, they’re there to bolster you. They’re performing for you.” (S5)

“It made me feel good a little bit because she was gorgeous, she was married, she was everything – because it’s gotten to the point where I was very picky before about who I was after, and I just had some beautiful, beautiful women, and she was in the classification.” (S6)

All subjects experienced a period of sexual exploration that was guided by their curiosities and excitement about experiencing their new found sexuality, but none of the subjects discussed sexual matters with their parents. Discussion about sex was non-existent in all subjects’ households.

“I would masturbate to those images and it was the best thing since sliced bread as far as I was concerned at the time. That was at a young age, probably 12, 13, somewhere around there. That was my first experience with it because my parents never talked to me about sex.” (S1)

“My mother and father were very staunch Christians and they never talked to me about sex, ever.” (S5)

As most subjects explored their sexuality through adolescence and into young adulthood, they would simultaneously feel guilty about their behavior because of their Christian faith. While most subjects experienced guilt over their sexual acts, be it masturbation or pre-marital sex, the guilt was not strong enough to significantly distress them. Subjects would engage in a sexual act and feel guilt as a residual feeling. Throughout most of their sexual explorations, guilt was something that was consistently present for subjects but never strong enough to become oppressive.

“I didn’t feel guilty enough to stop or it wasn’t consuming guilt at the time.” (S1)

“Masturbation was always something that was a part of life for me. It’s one of those things that you always feel bad about, but then also, society says – well, you know, 95% of the children do it and the other 5% are lying, right? So as a culture, we basically say everybody is doing it, but ultimately you know that it’s a mixed message. In your heart, you know that it’s wrong.” (S2)

“I knew how much I liked doing this, but I knew that it was wrong. I don’t know how I justified it. But the sex continued, and there was guilt.” (S3)

“I know this isn’t right. I know that my beliefs say that I shouldn’t be doing this, and I’ve already lost my virginity, and I’m not supposed to do that until I get married. It was the constant nature of wanting it badly and pursuing it and, at the same time, that momentary relief and pleasure which then gives way to more guilt and remorse.” (S4)

Most subjects who were conflicted over their sexual exploration due to their faith thought that getting married would solve their problems. Subjects thought that their sexual behaviors would stop once they got married or that they would not want to have sex with others because they would have sex with their wives all the time.

“I remember distinctly praying, sophomore, junior year to send me a wife, asking God to send me a wife because I felt guilty about what I was doing.” (S1)

“There was always some thought in the back of my mind, when I get married, that’s it. When I get married, that’s going to be it.” (S2)

“I thought after I got married, I’d have sex all the time so I wouldn’t have to act out sexually. I’d be legit, and I’d quit.” (S3)

“I did think that once I was married and I had a wife, and we have the freedom to engage in sex whenever we want, things will be better.” (S4)

“I think everything in my situation thinks, ‘Ah, I’m married. It’s going to be the end of whatever I’m doing here – masturbation and everything else,’ but it’s not. It’s not an answer.” (S6)

Some subjects also had unrealistic expectations about sex, which ranged from subjects thinking that they would have sex whenever they wanted once they were married; such fantasy-like expectations of sex were generated through media and pornography.

“All of a sudden this fantasy and this image and the projection that you think is rightfully yours that you’re going to get from your spouse doesn’t materialize. It just wasn’t the ideal, what you expect, you know, dirty, whatever you want, and kind of just no holds barred.”(S1)

“We were married, we slept next to each other, so it’s just natural – you have sex every night. Every night would be fine with me, and when you don’t, there’s something wrong with that.” (S3)

“The way I looked at sex was that ‘This is going to be great. This is going to be someone who will meet my needs whenever I want.’ I had an unrealistic expectation of what a true intimate relationship was all about.” (S4)

“The fantasy world that I lived in was starting to intrude on the intimacy that we had in our marriage. There was just no doubt about that. Our sexual relationship was good, but like an addict, it had to be more and more and more. You always need a higher fix. You always need more, so just the mundane making love to the same woman for nine years. To an addict, that gets old and dull.” (S6)

After subjects got married, problems were usually present from the very beginning between spouses. Initial problems differed among couples from personality conflicts to getting married because of pregnancies to problematic emotional issues.

“Had we not gotten pregnant, the type we were, we probably never would’ve gotten married. So then I started to get angry. You know, I had prayed for a wife from God, and I started to get angry because she wasn’t the ideal or what I thought I needed or should I say, that I wanted.” (S1)

“Then I got married and because, like I said, my girlfriend got pregnant. Although we loved each other, we wanted to do the right thing, ultimately, I think there was some resentment there.” (S2)

“As far as her self-esteem issues, if she had done some work with a counselor to address those issues instead of waiting 17 years into our marriage. For some of those things, she says she has to accept some responsibility.” (S3)

“I feel like I’m inadequate about how to deal with myself in the process of a lot of these things along with things from her family. So here we are two inadequate not well adjusted people coming together to create a marriage.” (S4)

As the couples continued to be married, all subjects experienced increasing problems in their marriages, especially as responsibilities became greater due to children, money, and illnesses.

“The marriage was rocky, but my wife always said, “We’re going to get a divorce once the kids are grown.” She’s only going to stay married because of the kids.” (S1)

“I would get home, and we had a young daughter, and it would either be time for me to take our daughter to get off work, and all types of selfish behavior on both of our parts as

far as that was concerned. And that wasn't the only stress. We argued ... and so that caused tension for us.” (S2)

“After a couple of years into our marriage, [our sex life] started to become a source of contention. I would bring it up and we would have minor arguments, but it just got to the point where I thought that it wasn't worth arguing over it because she's not going to change anything.” (S3)

“Marriage and then one daughter and then another daughter, it just got harder and harder.” (S4)

It was an existence. We put up with each other. Not a lot of emotion or fighting or anything like that, we were just there. Then when she got her tubes tied, the sex was gone. So, we just sort of participated in the marriage because of the kids.” (S5)

“We were just growing further and further apart and the emotional distance and the physical distance was a problem. There was no sexual attraction, no spark, nothing.” (S6)

One issue that some subjects experienced was initial confusion over being a spiritual leader; they did not know what it meant and how they should establish that role. Though not all subjects were initially conflicted, most believed that their role in the household was to lead the family spiritually. Because they were not leading the family in the prescribed way or because they did not know how to do it, a contention was consistently present between subjects and their wives on that matter.

“She [was] tired of doing ... the father role. Before it was just basically avoidance of the kids, avoidance of responsibility. I would just provide money and do my own thing, so she had to – I was always the disciplinarian and I still was the father but not the nurturing communicative person. That was her. She was nurturing and communicative, and I was

distant and cold. The only part of their lives that I would be a part of was when it would come to activities.” (S1)

“Deep down I was also always in a place where I was always young but I was always having to be a leader, you know what I mean? So even in church, in church, we were the young couple, and I didn’t feel like I could.” (S2)

“I was a follower and not a leader. That was a big issue. She wanted a man, and I was not a man.”

“How can you as the spiritual leader act this way? What kind of example are you. I mean, I certainly felt this way. I’m supposed to be the spiritual leader of the house. That’s been an issue for my wife sometimes.” (S4)

As the presence of stress in their marriages increased, subjects would use sexual behaviors as a way to cope with their discontented situations. Behaviors differed among all subjects and would range from viewing online pornography to attending strip clubs to utilizing massage parlors to purchasing escort services.

“At night when you’re there in your thoughts, okay, you can fantasize a while, you can please yourself and then the thoughts are right back there. And so that was a typical day for years, and it was just miserable.” (S1)

“We would fight, and I would have a wife that was bickering with me all the time and then here was this woman that would want to talk and spend time with me and not bicker and harass me from that standpoint, and until ultimately it led to some sexual experiences together.” (S2)

“That was a good escape from the realities of the things that were happening. At the time, early on, it was just fun. Later on it became, hey I’m feeling bad and I know a way to make me feel better. It was more about stress relief for me.” (S3)

“In reality, life is not easy and marriage is hard, my desire for pornography increased because I used pornography to run away from them.” (S4)

“Where [my sexual behavior] became more prevalent again was after my present wife had her tubes tied and we became not as active sexually. That’s when it started progressing again.” (S5)

“[Our sex life] just was okay, and then it went away ... that’s when I really, really started acting out and just leaning constantly on pornography, movies, fantasy. I turned immediately to acting out like I never had done before, and that’s where I lived for twenty-five years.”

Some subjects would plan their days around their sexual behaviors and consistently need to have sexual outlets present to the point where their behaviors became significant elements in their lives.

“Then I would plan my travel according to whatever city I could go where I knew somebody, and then before I’d go there, I’d surf the internet for escort services and try to line it up by the time I got there. So I would plan my work schedule around my addiction.” (S1)

“At my other job I’d call in sick every now and then and I’d spend the whole day in front of my computer screen.” (S3)

“Any type of sexual activity that I had engaged in, I did not want to lose that outlet whether it was pornography, magazines, or women. Any sexual connection I had with a

woman, I wanted to maintain at any cost whether I would lie or propose marriage, anything to keep that.” (S4)

“I wasn’t careful with money. It wasn’t like I spent thousands of dollars on my addiction. I didn’t, but everything else was secondary in my life. It just was. The only thing that wasn’t secondary was my kids.” (S6)

Many subjects traveled, which gave them a sense of freedom to do what they wanted sexually. Others would utilize work time to act out or wait until their spouses were away or asleep to act out.

“I think it was after about a year of traveling, I finally called an escort, .and she came and performed sex, and I didn’t get caught.” (S1)

“Things were okay for a while, a long time. It was deep down inside. No one knew. I was in the military; we changed stations. I went from [one city] out to [another city].” (S2)

“My wife’s a very sound sleeper. So, I’d get up about two in the morning just to spend an hour or two on the computer. I would know my wife’s schedule the day before or a couple of days before, so I would know when she would be out of the house, and so I knew that I could set that time aside for computer time. Mostly it was just waiting for her to go to bed because that’s when I would do most of my acting out, at night time. I would also do it a lot at work.” (S3)

“When I started to travel and had access to the internet and other women, my addiction really took off.” (S4)

“I was taking a lot of courses for learning more about my job, and I used some of that time – instead of going to the course, I’d go to a strip club or something.” (S5)

“I worked out of the office for a company, and then I went back into the office, and there was a very beautiful young lady that worked there. She was two years younger than I was. I don’t know if it was to see if I could do it again. It wasn’t really even a challenge. It was just so stupid, but I went ahead and did it. I had an affair with her.” (S6)

All subjects felt guilty about their extra-marital sexual behavior. While some initially thought that they were not hurting anybody because they were only engaging in pornography-based sexual behavior, others felt an oppressive sense of guilt for their sexual conduct.

“I would come home and look at her and who she is and, knowing what I’m doing to her behind her back, and then I’d look at the mirror and hate myself.” (S1)

“I can remember being in my hotel room. I travel a lot, and this woman had called me, she wanted me to come over, and I know I shouldn’t go, and ... yet, somehow, I go over there. And I remember after I left being so remorseful and so repentant and just torn up.” (S2)

“It was wrong. ‘He who looks upon a woman with lust has already committed adultery in his heart,’ so there was that guilt.” (S3)

“I knew that I was not acting like a good Christian, and I knew that I was not acting the way that God would want me to act.” (S4)

“If I had ten dollars, I’d end up with five dollars and couldn’t account for where the other five dollars went. That was a suspicion my wife had said, ‘What are you doing with it?’ That’s what hurt me more because I didn’t want to say that I used it wrongly, but I know I did, and that bothered me.” (S5)

“[In] the twenty-five years that I was in this addiction ... it was always like, what’s wrong with you? You’ve got to stop doing this.” (S6)

To cope, some would blame their wives for their extra-marital activities, often feeling that their wives were not behaving the way that they should and giving them what they needed sexually or emotionally.

“And we would go to counselors, and I would never divulge my behavior. It was always my wife’s fault. I was always going to try to get her to act the way she should act.” (S1)

“I remember even blaming my wife because of my pornography problem, ‘Well, if you would just put out more, I wouldn’t have to resort to this.’” (S3)

“To me it created the lie for me why it would be okay for me to leave my wife and children to be with this other woman that I was having this affair with. Because look, this marriage is done, it’s over, it’s been dead for so long. You don’t meet my needs. I don’t meet your needs. None of us is happy. I just want to be happy.” (S4)

Some subjects would get angry with God, though most did not have negative feelings about God despite their ongoing prayers to God. Almost all subjects pled with God to change them and take away their sexual temptations. When God did not, subjects dealt with the situation in different ways, but all used their dependence on God as a way to escape responsibility or rationalize their continued sexual behavior. Some subjects relied on God’s forgiveness to redeem them each time they acted out, others felt so overwhelmed by guilt that they felt a need to act out sexually because they were not able to cope, while still others figured that they were going to hell anyway so they may as well do what they wanted in their sinful life.

“Eventually, I just left my faith altogether because I figured A) God wasn’t big enough to take this from me, because he wasn’t doing it. B) He could care less about me, and C) I’m going to hell. So, if I’m going to hell and all this, then I might as well have fun and do what men do.” (S1)

“You just feel terrible, until ultimately you become very upset with God. You know, why did you make me this way? Why did you make me with such a personality? When I would cry out to God, it would be out of shame and out of guilt, just wanting to be forgiven. I would want to be changed, but deep down you don’t really want to.” (S2)

“Whenever I was in church, I would pray, ‘God, please forgive me that I viewed pornography this week. Please forgive me that I lusted, and please forgive me this,’ and so I was always washed clean of it. Every Sunday, I was washed clean, and in the back of my mind, I was thinking, I know I’m going to pray this next week.” (S3)

“Dealing with that pain and hurt and struggle is what made it worse and one of the reasons that I sought more of it because I needed to seek more in order to cover more of the pain. And the more I acted out, the more guilty and remorseful I felt. The more that I engaged in sexual behavior and the more I had to cover up, it was just a downward spiral.” (S4)

“[I would feel] remorseful. Not good about it. It was like, ‘Okay, I did it. I’m wrong. Let’s not try it again.’ [After] the same thing [would happen again], the same basic situation – ‘Okay, you did it. Okay, so what.’ I’d ask God for forgiveness and let it go at that. That would help the initial pain over the situation.” (S5)

“I’d say I was sorry. I’d ask for forgiveness and just leave it at that and then move on to the next time I was going to do it again. I felt better temporarily. I’d say, ‘I’m sorry. I

won't do that again," until ten days later or three days later or three hours later and again, 'I'm sorry. I won't do that again,' and then 'I'm sorry. I won't do that again,' and again and again and again." (S6)

All subjects kept their marriage life and their extra-marital sexual life separate. All would lie to their wives when questioned about suspicious behavior and no subject would divulge information in marriage counseling. Their sexual lives were completely different parts of who they were, and separating the two lives was almost a natural consequence for all subjects.

"I started hanging around with the professional men, the men that ... have fun, just don't get caught. You know, it's okay, just leave it out there, don't get involved, just do your thing; you need to have your needs met and come home and be the great husband." (S1)

"One woman that was a wife of a friend who would have inappropriate communications with me, and it would start out with, "Hey, how's the kids? What's going on?" whether it was a chat or an email or whatever, and it would always turn to a sexual nature. I allowed that situation to stay in the dark, and it caused me guilt and shame and anger." (S2)

"We had gone to see a marriage counselor after eight years of being married, but we never talked about the problem. It was always about errors in communication." (S3)

"I just couldn't believe it that I had been lying to my wife even after I came home again and said, 'Everything is fine. Everything will be better now.'" (S4)

"I'd go to a strip club or something. That, of course, was my little secret, and I started using money to pay for stuff like that." (S5)

“Our sex life was non-existent. She’d say, ‘You don’t want me. I catch you looking at these other women. What’s wrong? You had this affair a long time ago? Why did you do that?’ She has a million questions, which I understand. [She never knew about the other affairs.] She may have suspected, I don’t know.” (S6)

Subjects’ religious lives and sexual lives were also separated. To their church-going friends, subjects’ lives seemed perfect. Subjects played the parts of the perfect husbands, perfect fathers, and/or perfect church members.

“[I was] playing the part of the great husband, the father, the Christian man.” (S1)

“I’d fight all the way to church and open the car door and be grumbling, and open the car door and be like, ‘Hey brother, how you doing?’.” (S2)

“I found a church in that area and I played the part real well. I knew I was saved, there was no doubt about that. I would read the Bible. I played a good part.” (S3)

“They knew me as the perfect husband, father, student, and later in life worship-leader, elder. People thought, ‘What a great guy,’ and I had all of this hidden.” (S4)

All subjects were very involved in their churches while they were engaging in their extra-marital sexual behaviors and their experiences ranged from being elders to deacons to Sunday school teachers to public speakers. Being involved in the church and being spiritual leaders made many subjects feel good about themselves. While others continued to be conflicted about their guilt as they remained leaders in the church, they remained in their spiritual roles as they engaged in their sexual behaviors.

“I was at church making a great speech about my dad and the importance of family. Again, playing the part of the great husband, the father, the Christian man, talking about the love and honor and respect of who my dad was and how he’s a great man, all that

stuff. Lying on the altar of God. But again, it was great because people told me how great I was, and, you know, just painting this image of, I'm living the ultimate life.” (S1)

“I was trying to counsel these men and yet this was hidden, this was something that was going on because relationships were still a problem for me as far as wanting to take them in ways, wanting to cross boundaries with women that I never should cross.” (S2)

“For a while I taught Sunday school during my active addiction. I also did a junior church where I would have second through sixth grade kids once a month while the adults were upstairs having their service. I'd have a service with the kids.” (S3)

“I was very, very involved in the church, and I always have been, really. I look back and it's a very curious duality to me. I feel like I've been an addict for as long as I've been a born-again Christian. I have always wanted to be the person that follows the right road that is an exemplary person and an exemplary Christian, but at the same time, I've been addicted to pornography. Nobody knew me anything other than a perfect guy, a good Christian, a good father and dad, and someone who professed and believed in the Lord as my savior.” (S4)

“I got elected to the deacons and was very involved with deacon work for some time. I was the assistant deacon before I stepped down.[and the sexual behaviors] still there. It's always been there.” (S5)

“I was an elder in the church. It didn't bother me. It was a separate life. Your addiction is over here and your real life is over hear, never the two shall meet. There was no confliction at all.”(S6)

As subjects persisted in separating their spiritual and marital lives from their extra-marital sexual lives, they continued to struggle with guilt, shame, and fear. Most

subjects kept their behaviors a secret from everyone until they faced significant consequences.

“I got caught, and it was my brother-in-law who caught me [on a chat line]. When I heard his voice, he said, ‘What are you doing on this line?’ So as soon as I heard that, it was like a piercing through my heart because I thought, ‘Finally caught.’ I had been caught before [by my wife], but I always lied. But this time now, it’s real because it no longer is within just the confines of me and her. It’s in the family; now the family knows. Now everybody knows that I’m going to get exposed.” (S1)

“My wife can’t even turn on a computer, so I had this stuff hidden back in filters. So she sits down and in three clicks, she has all these e-mails popped up that I’d never even seen. They’ve just been filtered back there, and they are crude, and it’s terrible. I mean, the air was thick and God had said, ‘Enough’s enough.’ And I could just feel that sword, that flame of righteousness pierced my heart and yank it all out, and that was kind of my day of reckoning.” (S2)

“My wife caught me, and she looked at me and she said, ‘You get help, or you’re out of here, and you’ll never see your son again.’ So the very next day, I get to work and I look up ‘sex addiction,’ and I start looking at SA.” (S3)

“I said [to the woman I was having an affair with], ‘I can’t do this.’ Well, she was angry. I was away on a business trip when I called her and told her this in this message, and she actually sent me an e-mail message, and she said, ‘Fine. You want to do this? I’m going to call your wife and tell her all these things you’ve been doing that you haven’t told her.’ So, I called my counselor and admitted all that to him, and he said, ‘You got to call your

wife. She's got to hear it from you,' and I knew that. So, anyway, I did that – that was my rock bottom day. I called her and I told her this.” (S4)

“I got into an accident as a result of being at an adult bookstore. I left there, and I got into a traffic accident. My wife confronted me with it and she said, “You have to do something about this. You either have to do it, or you're out.” I didn't want to destroy this marriage like I had the other one, so I basically started looking at how I was going to go about doing this.” (S5)

“It was a decision that my wife and I made. It was almost like, you need to go to this or you need to do something or we're done. She pretty much said to me, ‘You need to go to this or I'm done.’” (S6)

A few sought help from their church leaders but did not feel that they received guidance that helped them in any way, and so they continued their behavior and kept it secret.

“My preacher has no clue. I went to him and told him my story, and he's like, ‘I don't know what to do. I don't want to judge you.’ So what do you do?” (S2)

“I remember going to one of the elders, and I told him what my problem was – I see a pretty girl, I got to look. It's lust. I see a pretty girl, and I got to look. I got to look. What do I do? What is the answer? He looked at me and said, ‘Son, I'm 75 years old and I still have that problem, and I thought, I'm a dead duck. All you got to do it you got to pray more. You got to read your Bible more.’ I did. I prayed more. I read my Bible more, and it didn't seem to work. It wasn't helpful at all, not for me.” (S3)

All subjects made genuine steps towards significantly changing their behaviors only after they felt exposed and were confronted with consequences that they felt would

be considerably harmful to them. During or after confrontation, most subjects felt that God spoke to them and instructed them to change their lives and that they had reached a point in their lives where they needed to make a decision and that decision was to stop their sexual behaviors and honor God. *“The third day, as their worshipping, I’m starting to open up a little bit, but that’s when God called me and really started my healing process. He said, ‘Why are you still crucifying me?’ And I had no idea what the hell that meant in my mind. And then it became real to me; His death on the cross, He’d forgiven my sins and He wanted to take them upon Himself, but in my addiction, I never accepted that forgiveness because I always thought that I was going to hell.” (S1)*

“And it was like just a flaming, I call it the flaming sort of righteousness, you know. There was a spiritual battle going on around me, and I mean, the air was thick and God had said, enough’s enough. And I could just feel that sword, that flame of righteousness pierced my heart and yank it all out.” (S2)

“I hit the wall, and it hurt. I knew then that I did not want to destroy a second marriage. The impact of God and my religious background really came to a head there. God grabbed me and said, ‘You’re wife told you to do something. I’m telling you to do something.’ Basically, that’s when I started to take the bull by the horns.” (S5)

All subjects felt a heavy reliance on God and a recovery program.

“I pattern my day with discipline and focus on Him in order so I don’t have to go back there.” (S1)

“I don’t have a full year of sobriety right now. I had three years, and I lost sobriety. Nothing major [happened], just stress and just not holding to it and not being part of a brotherhood, if you will, not being a part of SA.” (S2)

“I get up every morning and do my morning meditations. I have my phone set for 12:12 because I live by the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. My phone alarm goes off at 12:12, and I turn the lights off in my office, and I turn the computer screen off. I tell the secretary to hold the calls, and for ten minutes, I just sit and I pray.” (S3)

“I went to SA for about two and a half years, and then I got more connected with a friend and an accountability group and I do that and continue counseling sessions. I have found that more helpful to me because those things are all Christian based.” (S4)

“I don’t have a sponsor, but I will sponsor somebody. With me, I feel that my sponsor is God, and as long as I can answer to God, I’m okay. God helps me stop, so that’s my sponsor.” (S5)

“You see a beautiful woman, and you say, ‘God, thank you for that beautiful woman. I hope she has a nice day. My name is yada yada. I love my God. I love my wife. I love my son. I love my daughter,’ and by that time, your mind is turned, and you’re away from that. If you use them, they’re going to work, and after time it becomes almost automatic.” (S6)

Marriages continued to be stressful for most subjects due to past behaviors. Many wives continued to have trust issues, and subjects would depend on God to continue to mend their marriages.

“Do I make mistakes? Sure. Does she still get triggered and angry? Absolutely. Is she ever going to forgive me one hundred percent? Probably not” (S1)

“Things are fantastic, and then we have our rough days.” (S2)

“Those are still the issues that we are currently working on. I’m a follower and I allow others to be emotional barometers, and the lack of trust. My wife does not feel like she

can be vulnerable with me for fear of being hurt because she's afraid of another let down. Those are the things that we are addressing now in our therapy.” (S3)

“There are lots of things that have happened that she questions me. She doesn't believe me, even though I can say, “No, that's never happened,” but what can I do? I can't change that, and the only reason she feels that way is because of what I did. So, all I can do is pray.” (S4)

“We're doing better, but no. We're still in a very difficult situation. She doesn't understand the addiction. It's still very personal to her. I can't tell her, ‘This was not about you.’ There's no way that she'll ever believe that.” (S6)

Most subjects took on more responsibility in their families' duties and worked towards re-establishing their roles as spiritual leaders. Combined with subjects' wives' distrust, some couples also experienced power struggles over the re-establishment of male spiritual leadership.

“I'm re-establishing the Godly role that I should play. It's still hard because, you know, she was so independent doing things on her own – to allow her to let some of that down ... but I'm establishing it.” (S1)

“From a head of the house standpoint, I think it's good. I am very involved and engaged from a spiritual standpoint. That's not to say that we don't have our disagreements about what should happen here or there. Just like any other couple in a relationship, there are role conflicts, and my wife desires to be taken care of and to be protected. Sometimes I get it right, sometimes I get it wrong. We continue to work on it.” (S2)

“Now I'm making sure I lead the family in prayers at dinner time. My son and I always talk about God and Jesus, and I try to always talk about those things when my wife is

present. I attempt to pray with her at night and to do devotions with her. I don't know if it's reluctance, but she's uncomfortable with it, but I've initiated those things, to do the devotions with her and to talk about spiritual things.” (S3)

“That's been an issue for my wife sometimes. When she would feel angry about what happened she would say, “How could you do this? You professed to be this spiritual leader, and how can I put my trust in you as a spiritual leader now? Even though I know you've been in five years of recovery. You've been in groups. You speak to others in outreach efforts, but how do I know that you're not lying to me? How can I trust you as the head of the household?” (S4)

“I said, ‘I'm done tip-toeing around. Maybe that good or maybe that's bad, but that's the way it's going to be.’ I said, ‘I'm supposed to still be the head of this household, and that's just the way it's going to be.’” (S6)

While some subjects felt that their sexual addictions were God's will for their lives, others felt that their struggles shaped them to be better Christians and to be closer to God.

“If I could wipe away the hurt and the pain and the 25 years that I wasted of my life, I would love to do that, but I'm also thankful for where I'm at now by going through that because God has brought me so much closer to Him, leaning on Him and surrendering to Him more than ever because I have to, I don't have a choice. I'm no longer skating through life, I got to depend on Him because, let's face it, there's sex in the world everywhere.” (S1)

“For me, he allowed an addiction, and it's because I have this addiction and He didn't take it away that I get up every morning and do my morning meditations ... and it's

because of my addiction that I actually have grown much closer to my God. So in a lot of ways, I feel that I'm blessed I have this addiction because had it not been for this, I wouldn't have had the relationship with my God that I do now." (S3)

"That's what God intended for me. God knew that these things had to happen to me for me to have a personal realization that I needed to turn my life and my will over to the care of God." (S4)

"I wish it never happened. It did happen, and I think it has brought me closer to God, but I'm not so thankful for it." (S6)

Reflection on the General Narrative

The Reflection on the General Narrative provides a thematized description of the evangelical Christian man who identifies as a sexual addict. Themes that emerged for the majority of subjects are described, and existential-phenomenological themes are further elucidated to illuminate subjects' corporeal (lived body), temporal (lived time), spatial (lived space), and relational experiences (lived human relation) (Van Manen, 1997). The clarification of all themes produces a critical analysis of the evangelical male sexual addict's worldview.

Conflicted Childhoods

All subjects discussed conflict with their parental relationships, particularly in the area of rejection. All subjects felt unaccepted as children by one of the parents. S1 felt that his mother blamed him for his parents' divorce because she felt that S1's father loved him more than he loved her. S2 found out that the father that raised him was not his biological father, and he experienced a feeling of emptiness followed by anger after finding this out. S2 described having "a huge hole in his heart" after getting this news. S3

felt that his opinion did not matter to his mother and that he needed to earn her love through doing chores and running errands. S4's parents constantly fought and eventually divorced, and though he knew that his mother loved him, he felt that his father only wanted custody of him out of spite for S4's mother. S5 said that he grew up in a strict Christian home with parents who were not affectionate towards one another. S5 felt that his mother did not want to spend the time to talk with him about issues he was having. S6 felt like he was the "black sheep" of the family and that his parents treated him differently than his two brothers who were both valedictorians of their classes while S6 was seen as the underachiever of the family.

Disconnection with Mother or Father

All subjects experienced an emotional disconnection from a parent starting from childhood, and most of them verbalized ongoing struggles with trying to re-connect with those absent parents throughout adolescence and into adulthood. S1 felt that he was never good enough for his father's standards and after his father left the family, S1 felt a bigger emotional void. As his father was on his death bed, S1 yearned to hear that his father thought he was significant and that he loved him, but his father never told him that before he died. After S2's mother and father divorced, he did not speak to his father very often as he was attending college, though his younger siblings continued to interact with his father. S2 thought that his father felt more obligated to spend a lot of time with S2's younger siblings, and therefore, S2 was not a priority because he was older than them. S2 also connected with his biological father after he found out that he was adopted in an effort to deal with the emptiness and anger he felt about his biological father leaving him. S3's father was not involved with the family in way that was significant to S3. He

described his father as irresponsible and absent, and S3 suspected that his mother eventually asked his father to leave the house. S3 never felt close to his father, and as a teenager, he did not have any contact with him and did not want any contact with his father. Eventually, S3's estranged father became a born-again Christian and pursued S3. With some difficulty, S3 and his father re-connected and formed a relationship. After the divorce, S4 did not see his father. His mother had full custody of him, and his sister lived with his father. S4 felt a lot of resentment towards his father because of the volatile divorce, feeling that his father used him and tried to get custody of him only to make his mother look like an inadequate parent. S5 felt disconnected with his mother, feeling that she was not interested in talking to him about anything. He described her as "very proper" and seemed detached when he spoke about her. S6's mother was a strict parent and he described her as being "harsh" when he was younger because "she had to be." S6 only saw his father on weekends because his father would work late through the week.

Initial Sexual Exploration and Action

All subjects explored their sexuality in childhood and adolescence. S1 started masturbating to sexual images of women at age 12 or 13. S2 had multiple sexual partners as a teenager and was promiscuous in college. S3 first had sex with a girl he was dating in college. He later engaged in casual sex with strangers in college. S4 started masturbating to pornographic images as a child, and, as a teenager, he started to engage in sexual activity with a girl that he was dating, and they would have sex any time they had the opportunity. S5 started looking at pornographic images when he was 12 or 13 because he was sexually curious about women. S6 remembers being sexually aware when he was in second grade and that he would pursue one girl in particular, trying to sit next

to her whenever he could so that he could touch her. In grade school, he would look up girls dresses, and in junior high, he would masturbate as he thought about kissing certain girls. S6 engaged in sexual activity with girls as a teenager and then began having ongoing sexual liaisons with a number of different women into young adulthood.

Guilt and Shame

All subjects felt guilty and shameful because of their sexual activities. In their initial sexual exploration phase, all subjects felt that what they were doing sexually was wrong. S1 felt guilt and shame when he continued to masturbate in college because he knew it was a sin and that it was wrong. Though he continued to masturbate, he repeatedly felt convicted because of his sexual behavior. S2 also felt guilty about masturbating because he thought it was wrong, grounding his reasoning in the Bible verse that described Onan spilling his seed on the ground and God being displeased with him because of this. S3 felt guilty having premarital sex with his girlfriend because he knew it was a sin. When S3 got aroused by women he saw around him, he would feel a great sense of remorse because of the Bible verse that states one has already committed adultery in one's heart when looking at another woman in lust. S4 felt shameful about masturbating as a child, and though he did not identify his behavior as being wrong, he knew it was to be done very discretely. S4 felt guilty about losing his virginity because he knew that he was not supposed to have sex until after he got married. He would continue to have sex out of wedlock, feel pleasure and then he would feel a great sense of remorse because of his Christian beliefs. He would feel like he was a bad Christian and a bad person because of his behavior. S5 felt guilty about his extra-marital sexual behavior when he was in his second marriage because he was more involved with his church than

he ever had been before. S6 would feel guilty about his extra-marital sexual behavior and would ask God why he could not stop himself. He would try to depend on his will-power to stop his behavior but always reverted back to acting out sexually and then feeling guilty about it. Neither S5 nor S6 felt any excessive shame or guilt about their sexual behaviors being sinful until they were engaging in extra-marital sexual behaviors.

In addition to all subjects' feelings of guilt related to failing God, all subjects also felt remorseful because of morals about monogamy in marriage. S1 would look at his wife and hate himself because he felt so guilty about what he was doing sexually behind her back. S2 wanted to be "a good husband and father" but felt that he was not accomplishing this because he was having extra-marital affairs, and he felt remorseful because he thought he was failing to meet that standard. S3 felt guilty about continuing to secretly view pornography throughout his marriage because he felt he was committing adultery in his heart every time he lusted after an image. S4 felt that he was not acting like a good Christian as he engaged in sexual activities with other women while he was married. As a married man, S4 knew that God wanted him to act in a certain way, and S4 knew that he was violating God's standard of marriage. S5 felt most guilty about lying to his wife to cover up his extra-marital sexual behaviors, and his consistent lying continued to bother him throughout the time he was sexually acting out. S6 felt like he caused a substantial amount of the struggles that he and his wife experienced in their marriage. He felt like he "wrecked her life" and continued to feel remorse and shame about being a bad husband after he admitted to his wife that he had an affair with another woman.

Separating Marital Life from Sexual Life

All subjects created a clear division between their marital lives and their extra-marital sexual lives, constructing two life-worlds in which they engaged in extremely different ways. S1 described his first extra-marital encounter with another woman as “opening up a secret life.” S1 would act out with other women as he traveled for work, and when he would come home to his wife, he would not feel “completely numb” to his wife. When S1 and his wife attended counseling sessions, S1 would never divulge his secret sexual behavior. He would take the counselor’s suggestions about communicating better and would do things around the house to show his wife that he was making an effort to be a better husband while making sure that he did not get caught for his ongoing extra-marital sexual behaviors. S1 felt that he needed to have his sexual needs met outside of his marital relationship and then he could come home and be a great husband to his wife. S2 stated that he did not let anyone know about his extra-marital sexual affairs. He would change stations when he was in the military and would have sexual liaisons with different women, though he did not let anyone know about his actions. When he traveled for work, he had sex with a woman and did not tell his wife about the affair. S3 would keep his online pornography use secret from his wife, planning his computer use at home around times when she would not be home and also using his work computer as an avenue to view online pornography so that his wife would not catch him. In counseling, S3 did not mention that he viewed internet pornography and focused on errors in communication as the chief problem of their marriage. S4 would tell his wife that he was going to run a few errands in order to buy pornographic magazines that he would later hide from her. He would tell his wife he was working late and then go on the

internet to meet women. When he was traveling for work, he would call the women he met online and engage in phone sex. He had long-term extra-marital affair with a woman that he kept secret from his wife and his wife asked him to move out. Even after exposure about the affair, he did not divulge everything about the affair to his wife, and he told her it was over when it was not in an effort to continue to engage in the extra-marital affair. Throughout marriage counseling, S4 continued to have an affair with this woman, and he did not divulge the information even after he moved back in with his wife. S5 would go to strip clubs and massage parlors instead of attending work-related events while in his first marriage. In his second marriage, S5 would go to adult book stores and spend the money his wife gave him for other things on magazines or peep shows. S6 engaged in multiple affairs over 25 years while married to his wife and did not divulge any information about those affairs. He had told her about the first affair and was then asked to leave the home. After moving back into the house, S6 engaged in other affairs and did not tell his wife about any of those liaisons.

Separating Religious Life from Sexual Life

In addition to needing to construct a clear separation between their secret sexual lives and their marital lives, all subjects also created a third separation – the religious life. S1 stated that he felt like he was “living in the closet” when he masturbated. Though he did not feel like he was hurting anybody, he felt that he needed to keep his behavior secret and avoided going to God about his convictions. Though S1 and his wife had continual arguments about his behavior, when they were in public, he would act like everything was fine. S2 would argue with his wife on the way to church and would act like everything was going well when they engaged with other churchgoers. S2 would

continually repent about his sexual behaviors every time he went to church, feeling remorse for his actions. He felt like his entire life became about repentance. S3 would avoid thinking about the sexual behaviors he engaged in that he felt were sinful. He would turn the television on at night so that he would not be alone with his thoughts and would not have to reflect on his sexual behaviors and what God thought of him. He still went to church, prayed and engaged in church activities while he was continuing to view online pornography. When he was in church, he avoided thinking about his online pornography use, and when he was viewing online pornography, he avoided thinking about religion. He thought, “I just won’t think about it. I’ll continue to go to church on Sundays. I’ll go through the motions.” S4 would continue to go to church with his family while he was having an affair with another woman. He did not tell anyone about his sexual behaviors and everyone at church thought he was a good Christian and father. S5 also continued to go to church while he was engaging in secret sexual behaviors, and though he felt guilty about his behavior, his guilt did not have enough impact on him for him to stop engaging in secretive sexual activities. S6 felt that his faith and his sexual activities were completely separate domains, and he did not allow them to converge in his mind. He did not allow his faith to interfere with the secret sexual part of his life.

Reaction Formation: A Parallel

While still engaging in their secretive sexual behaviors, all subjects held leadership positions in their churches. S1 spoke publicly in front of his church about the importance of family and marriage. S2 mentored some of the men in his church about sexual struggles that they were going through. S3 was a Sunday school teacher. S4 was a worship-leader and elder. S5 was a deacon, and S6 was an elder. The engagement in

leadership roles enabled subjects to feel as if they were good Christians or good people while they engaged in sexual behaviors that were, to them, clearly sinful. Leadership roles provided temporary moral relief from engaging in an immoral sexual life. S1 knew that he was “lying on the altar of God” when he talked about the importance of family to his church congregation, but he felt content in his speech because his fellow church goers would tell him how great he was. He felt he painted an image of himself as living the ultimate life, and that gave him validation. It was very important for S2 to represent an image of perfection in an effort to feel like he was in control. Though he was struggling with his own extra-marital sexual behaviors, men in his church would confide in him about their sexual liaisons, validating S2’s sense of emitting the image of perfection. S3’s role as a Sunday school teacher and involvement in numerous religious activities allowed him to think of himself as a good person. The image that S4 portrayed for others in church, the perfect husband and father who was dedicated to Godly living, was the person he always wanted to be. He knew he had this hidden sin, but he portrayed himself as an exemplary Christian and he felt that everyone in church thought of him that way. S5’s role as deacon and his increased engagement with church activities enabled him to decrease some of his secret sexual behaviors, though he still continued to engage in them. Even after committing to a life of sexual recovery, S5 thought of himself as a disciple or a prophet of God in the sexual addiction area and that God had chosen him for this role in order to help others. S6’s role as an elder in the church was strictly separate from his secret sexual behaviors, and he relished in being a leader in the church and being the “go-to guy.”

Asking God for Change

Though S6 depended solely on himself in his responsibility to change his behavior, the other five subjects continually asked God to change them and take away their sexual urges. S1 would bargain with God, praying, “If you take this behavior from me, I’ll go to church more often. I’ll read the Bible more. I’ll be a better husband.” S2 would plead, “I don’t want this. I don’t want this lifestyle. Take it away from me. Take this from me.” S3 prayed, “God, take this away. Take this lust away.” S4 begged, “Help me God. Take this from me. Please make it so I don’t want to pursue this.” S5 would tell God, “I can’t do this. Someone is going to get hurt, so I can’t do it,” in an effort to stop himself from acting on his sexual urges. S5 depended more on God to stop his sexual behaviors after he was in recovery. When he had an urge to act out he would pray, “God, I’m going to do something. Can you stop me? I want to be stopped! Stop me!” S5 felt that God stopped him from sexually acting out every time he prayed this during his recovery process.

Using the Relationship with God as a Rationalization for Sexual Behaviors

With the exception of S2, subjects used their evangelical faith as a rationalization to continue engaging in sexual behaviors that they deemed wrong or sinful. S1 felt that God gave up on him because he still continued to struggle with sexual urges. After years of asking God to take away his sexual urges with continued failure on God’s part to do so, S1 thought that God was either not big enough to take away his temptations or God did not care about him. Either way, S1 figured he was going to hell because of his failure to stop sexually acting out so he might as well continue with his sexual escapades and “do what men do.” S3 would participate in sexual acts that he thought were sinful or wrong

and depend on God to forgive him later after he prayed in repentance for his sins. For S3, he felt that he was always washed clean of his sin after he prayed to God, and sexually acting out became an easily pardonable offense. S4 continued to sexually act out in an effort to temporarily relieve himself from the immense amount of guilt and shame he felt about engaging in sexual activity that he believed was sinful. He knew that he was not the person that God wanted him to be, so he sexually acted out to cope with his painful feelings of shame. He sought more sexual activity to temporarily dull his interpersonal pain as his shame increased. He consistently reasoned that, in order to escape the overwhelming feelings of guilt and shame, he needed to find instant relief, and that relief was reliably found in sexual acts, even though the feelings of shame and guilt would inevitably return. S5 depended on God's forgiveness to help him deal with engaging in behavior that he thought was wrong. S5 would think, "Okay, I did it. I'm wrong. Let's not try it again," and he would ask God to forgive him. S6 would also depend on God's forgiveness. He would feel bad that he sexually acted out, would tell God he was sorry, feel better temporarily, and then he would act out again, repeating the same cycle over and over again.

Feeling that Marriage Would Solve Problems

Five of the six subjects discussed feeling that getting married would solve their sexual problems. Marriage was seen as the saving grace to the immoral sexual lives they felt they were leading. S1 prayed to God to send him a wife because he felt guilty about his solitary sexual behavior. He felt that a Christian woman would help him minimize or eliminate his sinful sexual urges because he would be intimate with his wife and she would meet all of his sexual needs. S2 felt that he would stop being promiscuous if he got

married because he believed in the sanctity of marriage and the importance of monogamy within the marriage bond. To him, marriage was a promise and serious business. He felt that he would not stray from that promise because he always believed that he was the type of person that put value in honoring promises. S3 thought that he would have sex all the time after he got married, so he would not have the need to act out sexually outside of the marriage. He saw marriage as a construct that made sexual activity legitimate in the eyes of God (unlike the sexual activity he engaged in out of wedlock). S4 thought that he would be able to engage in sex whenever he wanted after he was married and that his sexual needs would be completely satisfied. S6 thought, “I’m married. It’s going to be the end of whatever I’m doing here – masturbation and everything else.” He thought that marriage would instantaneously fix his sexual situation.

Unrealistic Expectations about Sex

Though S2 and S5 did not have unrealistic expectations about marital sex, three subjects initially thought that the sex in their marriage would be very different than what they experienced. One subject’s expectations of sex changed years into his marriage, and he grew dissatisfied as well. Because the expectation failed to be met, these four subjects felt disappointed with their marital sex lives. S1 thought that sex would be like he had envisioned in his fantasy world through pornography and media. He thought that he would have sex any time he wanted, however he wanted. He thought sex would be dirty and more exciting than he experienced. Because S3 and his wife were married and they slept in the same bed together, he thought that it was just natural to have sex every night, and when they did not have sex, he thought there was something wrong with that. S4 thought of his wife, “This is great. This is going to be someone who will meet my needs

whenever I want.” Although he thought that their sexual relationship was good, S6’s fantasies intruded on his satisfaction with marital sex. Making love to the same woman for nine years grew mundane for him, and he began looking for outside sexual satisfaction.

Initial Trouble in Marriage

Four of the six subjects experienced difficulties very early in their marriages. S1 did not feel that he was ready to get married but felt that he had to marry because his wife got pregnant out of wedlock. He also did not feel that the woman he married was the right person for him because she did not share his evangelical faith, and so S1 felt he was robbed of the ideal marriage. S2 also married his wife because she got pregnant out of wedlock and he carried some resentment into his marriage because of that reason. He also resented his wife because she was able to settle into a married role and avoid promiscuous behaviors while he still struggled with sexual urges that he wanted to act on outside of his marriage. S3’s wife was not a born-again Christian, and he would witness to her about the need to be born-again, and it became a source of argument between them. His wife also had issues with her self-esteem, and this was an ongoing problem in their relationship. S4 felt inadequate as a person while his wife struggled with anger due to her family upbringing. They were both prone to tempers, outbursts, irrational behavior, and anger. S4 described his wife as “very explosive” and felt that they were “two unprepared, not well adjusted people [who] came together to create a marriage.” S5 and S6 denied any initial problems in their marriages.

Using Sexuality or Fantasy as a Way to Cope

All subjects used sexual behaviors or fantasies as a way to cope with their lives. S1 would use fantasy as a way to escape the reality of the situations or thoughts that were stressful to him. He would feel guilty about cheating on his wife and would often fantasize about his wife dying so that he would have the freedom to have all his fantasies met without feeling guilt. S2 would fantasize and engage in affairs when he felt emotionally disconnected from his wife. The affairs he had with other women helped console him when he felt worthless. When he and his wife would fight, he would find comfort with another woman who would want to talk to him and spend time with him. S3 continued to create sexual fantasies in his mind in an effort to escape the stress of his home-life as a child. Online pornography became a source of stress-relief from the stresses of marriage helped him feel sexually gratified when he did not have sex with his wife at the frequency that he thought he should. S4 masturbated to pornographic images because it helped him feel safe and loved, two feelings that he did not experience in his home as a child. As his marriage increased in difficulty, S4's desire for pornography increased and he continued to use it as a way to escape the stresses of marriage. After S5's wife had her tubes tied, the sex decreased, and S5 used pornography and peep shows as ways to cope with a declining marital sexual life. S6 also turned to extra-marital sexual behaviors as his marital sexual life decreased in frequency. He engaged in multiple affairs over 25 years to escape a conflicted and sexual unsatisfying marriage.

Using Sexuality a Way to Feel Affirmed

With the exception of S3, all subjects used sexual behaviors as a way to feel affirmed. S1 would get up in the morning to check the chat line to see who had messaged

him to see if there was some kind of answer on the other line that would fulfill him. He thought that he would finally feel significant when someone would tell him, “You’re wonderful.” S1 envisioned a fantasy woman that was beautiful and rich and felt significant when he had an affair with a woman that fit his fantasy profile. S2’s sexual relationships affirmed his identity as a man. As S2 moved from one sexual liaison to the next, he felt assured as a man. He felt affirmed when he got attention from women. When S4 would look at pornographic magazines, he would feel adequate, worthy, and loved. The pornographic images gave him a sense of unconditional love. If S5 did not feel that he satisfied his wife in every situation or if he was told that he did not do something right, he would feel insecure and that would trigger him to act out sexually in an attempt to make himself feel good about himself. He would go to a strip club and the dancers would render feelings of self-affirmation because they were performing for him and acting out his fantasies. S6 would become whatever a girl needed him to be in an effort to satisfy her. He was able to have sexual relationships with numerous women, and other men would envy him. His ability to seduce women became a game that he thought he was very good at playing. Some of the things that he did with women stemmed from his wanting to get even with the first girl he was in love with who broke his heart.

Preoccupation with Sexual Behavior

Four out of the six subjects became preoccupied with their secret sexual behaviors to the point that their behaviors became substantial parts of their lives. S1’s use of internet pornography consumed a great deal of his time, often spending 10-14 hours at a time online. He spent thousands of dollars to pay for sex with escorts and would embezzle money from his company to pay for his sexual liaisons. S3 would call in sick to

work so that he could spend all day looking at online pornography. He would often get out of bed at two-thirty in the morning while his wife was sleeping to spend an hour or two on the computer viewing pornography. At work, he would download pornography, and he eventually lost his job because of this reason. S4 would wake up in the morning and think, “When can I find my opportunity where I can have alone time to connect online?” He would talk online with hundreds of women, which resulted in dozens of cybersex relationships. Any sexual connection that S4 would have with a woman he knew, he wanted to maintain at any cost whether that would be to lie or to propose marriage. Except for S6’s children, everything else was secondary in his life to his sexual affairs. When S6 was offered an early retirement, he took the opportunity because retirement gave him more free time for his sexual affairs. He did not assess his financial situation and the debts that he still had to pay.

Ongoing Troubles in Marriage

Though not all subjects experienced problems in their marriages initially, every subject endured ongoing and increased difficulties in his marriage as the marriage progressed. S1 and his wife attended counseling three to four times to deal with their marriage issues, but S1 would never divulge his secret sexual behaviors. S1’s wife would often tell him that they would get a divorce after the kids were grown and that she was only staying in the marriage because of the children. S2 and his wife also sought counseling for their marital issues, though S2 did not feel that the counseling was very beneficial. Shortly after counseling, S2 had another affair. S2 would often be angry at his wife and think, “Why can’t she just leave me alone?” He often thought she was constantly nagging him, and they would argue a lot. S3 would often argue with his wife

about not having enough sex in their marriage. She felt that he was emotionally distant and would tell him that they would have sex more if he talk to her more and share his thoughts. In response, S3 felt that he shared more about himself that week, and when sex did not happen at the end of the week, he would resent her. After some time, S3 thought that having sex was not worth arguing about because he believed his wife would never change. S4 described marriage as difficult from the beginning, and as they had children, marriage became “harder and harder.” He felt that his marriage was “dead,” telling his wife “I’m leaving. I can’t put up with this anymore. I just can’t.” S5’s second wife was diagnosed with cancer, and the experience caused a great deal of stress for the couple. Though S5 did not verbalize any relationship problems with his wife outside of being caught for attending the adult book store, he remained weepy when he discussed the relationship he had with his wife. S6 and his wife ignored his past affair after he was invited to move back into the house, and S6 felt that it had a negative impact on their sex life. Eventually, the sex diminished. S6’s wife felt that S6 did not desire her sexually and they continued to remain sexually and emotionally distant.

Exposure as a Means to Change

Before surrendering to change, every subject was first exposed for his sexual indiscretions (with the exception of S6 who may have been motivated by the threat of full exposure). Exposure coupled with facing consequences that each subject deemed substantial enough to warrant reform instigated each individual recovery process. S1 was exposed by his wife many times, but he felt that he could control her and keep her silent. When S1 was found out by his brother-in-law, he felt that his family and everyone else would know that he was not the righteous man that he proclaimed to be and that

consequence was too much for him to bear. He planned on killing himself because he thought his life was over. Only seeing death as an option, S1 embraced the notion that he could recover through attending Every Man's Battle. S2's wife found numerous sexual e-mails that S2 had filtered in a spam folder from the woman he was having an emotional affair with. When his wife read all the e-mails in front of him, S2 felt "static" all around him. He knew that he loved his wife and that he did not want to lose her. That day started his recovery process. S3 was exposed by his job. He was fired by his employer for downloading pornography at work for a number of months. After he told his wife, he told himself that he would not view pornography online anymore because he had learned his lesson. And yet, after a week, he was online again browsing pornography. His wife caught him and told him, "You get help, or you're out of here, and you'll never see your son again." The prospect of losing his family prompted S3 to call Sexaholics Anonymous and enter the recovery program. S4 was exposed by a fellow church attendee who recognized behaviors in S4 that paralleled sexual infidelity. S4 confessed to his church friend but did not feel that he had a significant problem. S4 was eventually asked to leave his home because he was having an affair. Even after his marital separation and ongoing marital counseling during that separation, S4 did not sever the affair he was having with this woman, though he told his wife he had. Eventually, he decided to sever the relationship he had with the other woman because of his religious convictions. The woman became very upset and told him that she was going to tell his wife about the affair. Only after being faced with losing both relationships (the marital and the extra-marital) did S4 admit everything to his wife and commit to a recovery program. S5's wife confronted him after she found out that he was going to adult book stores and told him

that he needed to do something about his behavior or she was going to leave him. S5 did not want for his wife to leave him, and so he started attending Every Man's Battle. S6 was confronted by his wife about his emotional and sexual distance. His wife threatened to leave him if he did not get help for his sexual problem. His wife, however, did not expose the sexual affairs that he continued to be engaged in because she did not know. In S6's case, the consequences were enough to illicit motivation for change. Although, S6 may have been at the brink of exposure because his marriage was suffering, the potential threat of having his extra-marital affairs exposed in the near future may have been enough to motivate him to change.

Messages from God

Four of the six subjects stated that they received messages from God prior to their recovery process. When S1 first heard the advertisement about Every Man's Battle, he felt like God was calling him through the radio. On the third day of Every Man's Battle, S1 heard God say to him, "Why are you crucifying me?" but he did not know what that meant at the time until he thought about Christ's death on the cross. S1 realized that God had forgiven his sins but that he had never accepted God's forgiveness because he thought he was going to hell. When S2's wife confronted him with the sexual e-mails, S2 felt as if a dagger went through him like a flame and sucked his sin out. He felt electricity in the air, and he felt that something supernatural was happening. S2 stated that he "felt God's hand." He felt that his wife was driven by the spirit of God to find the e-mails and directed to expose him. S3 felt that the Holy Spirit spoke to him to become born-again, and he walked down the aisle at the church to achieve that. S5 also felt that God spoke to him and told him to become born-again. S5 stated that he was walking around the

university campus he attended, and he heard a voice that said, “Hey, how about it?” and he decided to be born-again through the university fellowship. S5 also felt God speak to him prior to his recovery. S5 asserted that God grabbed him and said, “You’re wife told you to do something. I’m telling you to do something,” and that was when S5 stated he sought help. S5 also stated that he would feel “God tapping him on the shoulder” and “little voices talking” to him.

Depending on God and a Recovery Program

All subjects embraced the concept of sexual addiction when they were introduced to it through a program. They viewed their recovery programs and their relationship with God as essentials in keeping them from sexually acting out. S1 started his recovery process with Every Man’s Battle and continued to attend accountability groups and church men’s groups. When S1 felt tempted to revert back to his sexual ways because he was feeling badly, he asked God to give him self-awareness about why he was feeling the way he was and asked for forgiveness for any resentment or bitterness he felt. S2 started his recovery with Every Man’s Battle and continued to depend on Sexaholics Anonymous for his recovery. S2 stated that he relapsed because he was masturbating. He attributed his relapse to his failure to go to meetings and a “don’t care attitude.” At the time of the interview, he was trying to return to the Sexaholics Anonymous program. S2’s relationship with God was also an essential factor in his recovery, and he stated that the sexual intimacy he has now with his wife is about worshipping God. S3’s joined Sexaholics Anonymous when he first sought help for his sexual behaviors and has continued to be involved in the program. S3 stated that he gets up every morning to read morning meditations. He programmed his phone alarm go off at 12:12 pm every day

because he stated that he lives by SA's twelve steps and twelve traditions. When the alarm rings, S3 turns off the computer and lights in his office and holds his calls for ten minutes so that he can pray. At night, S3 reads SA literature. S4 attended SA for over two years and later switched to attending men's accountability groups while continuing individual counseling. S4 felt his daily reliance on God as someone he can confide in and depend on to help him with any problems he may be having has been essential in his recovery. S4 also prays and reads his Bible daily. S5 stated that God was his sponsor and that he continued to depend on God to take away his sexual urges. He regarded himself as a disciple or a prophet and that God gave him insight to help others struggling with sexual addiction. S5's strong involvement in the sexual addiction groups in his church has continued since he sought recovery, though he states that he is very involved now in order to help others who struggle with sexual issues. S6 started his recovery by attending Every Man's Battle, and he stated that he depends on praying to God and on the tools he learned in SA to help him with his recovery process. S6 attends SA groups twice a week and uses prayer as a daily tool to help him avoid sexual temptations.

Establishing a Hierarchy in the Marriage

With the exception of S5, all other subjects worked with their marital partners to establish a hierarchy in the marriage where the man was the leader of the family. S1 stated that he was re-establishing his God appointed role as the leader of the family. It has been difficult renegotiating the hierarchical structure because S1's wife managed the family responsibilities by herself because he was constantly absent. It has also been challenging for her to give S1 more responsibility because trust is still a problem in their marriage. S1 feels that his marriage is an equal partnership since he started taking a more

active father role and that both partners have Christian responsibilities in the family, his being leader. S2 felt that he was developing as the head of the household, though disagreements continued about specific solutions to different situations. S2 and his wife continue to struggle with role conflicts, though he feels that there are definite hierarchical Biblical roles. S2 feels that he is still working on his exact role as a spiritual leader and is learning to accept that he may not determine it completely. S3 felt that he was a follower because he never initiated anything like vacations and other plans. This continued to be a problem for his wife and they continue to work on this issue in counseling. S3 feels that he has taken on a leadership position in his family, leading the family in prayers at dinner, talking to his son about God in his wife's presence (S3's wife is not born-again), and praying with his wife at night and doing devotions. Though S3's wife is uncomfortable with the nightly devotions and prayers, S3 feels it is important for him to do them as the spiritual leader of his family. S4 stated that he and his wife agree that he should be the head of the house, but his wife has had significant problems putting her trust in him. She would ask him, "How do I know that you're not lying to me? How can I trust you as the head of the household?" S4 would depend on God to help her with her trust issues, knowing that he could not change how she felt. S6 feels that he and his wife have made progress in their marital relationship but that they still had a substantial amount of issues to work on. S6 continues to feel unloved by his wife and states that she continues to blame him for the things he has done in the past and that he was limited in what he could say to her because she would state that he was being defensive.

Corporeal Reflection (Lived Body)

Through various points in their lives, subjects described a conflict between their bodies and their faith. Sexual arousal was pleasurable physically and, at the same time, distressing for subjects because of their spiritual beliefs. Subjects found themselves torn between their desire to sexually explore their bodies and their understanding that what they were doing was wrong. As subjects matured into their adulthood, they learned how to separate their bodily pleasures from their spiritual beliefs. Both aspects became opposite parts of their lives, and the subjects consistently felt conflicted as they moved from one side to the other. As young children and through adolescence, subjects felt guilty about their sexual explorations. S1, S2, and S4 continued to masturbate throughout college, yet felt conflicted about their behaviors because they believed that masturbation was sinful. S1 did not stop masturbating but felt an acute sense of guilt as he continued with this behavior and hid the fact that he engaged in masturbation from others. Because of his evangelical faith, S3 felt guilty and conflicted when he was sexually aroused by females he saw in his adolescence and when he masturbated to pornographic images. S5 and S6 did not disclose feelings of guilt over their sexual behaviors in their childhood or adolescence, but they also stated that they did not feel they were that serious about their faith the first time they were born-again. As S5 grew more involved with his religious faith, feelings of guilt were present when he would view pornography or pay for peep shows. S6 did not feel that he really became serious about his faith until shortly before his recovery, so he separated his religious thoughts from his sexual behavior even though he was involved in the church throughout his life.

Temporal Reflection (Lived Time)

All subjects' childhood experiences shaped how they engaged with others in their adulthood. S1 felt inadequate as a son his sense of inadequacy and his continued sense of not feeling that he was good enough urged him to find validation in sexual affairs. If he could find the ideal woman to love him, he would be affirmed and would no longer identify with the boy of his past. S2's experience as a boy whose biological father left him also translated to ongoing feelings of inadequacy. In adulthood he also felt inadequate and tried to affirm himself as the ideal man through sexual liaisons as well as trying to appear perfect. S3 was emotionally abused by his mother and she would tell S3 that his father was irresponsible and heavily involved in pornography use. S3's adult experiences mirrored his father's in two substantial ways. Coupled with S3's heavy use of online pornography, S3 did not take responsibility for any decisions in his family and depended on his wife to plan almost everything. In his adult life, S3 portrayed both of the character traits that his mother resented about his father: irresponsibility and pornography obsession. S4's consistently felt unloved, unsafe, and inadequate as a child. As an adult, he continually tried to fill his needs for love, safety, and feelings of adequacy by engaging with numerous women, desperate to hold on to every sexual relationship he had. If he feared that a woman he had formed a relationship with would leave, he did everything he could to try to get her to stay with him, often proposing marriage. S5 felt that his mother did not want to spend time with him or talk to him, and his feelings of (assumed) low self-worth as a child paralleled his feelings of inadequacy in his marital relationship. If he thought that his wife was dissatisfied with him for any reason, he would feel bad about himself and attempt to feel better by sexually acting out. As a child,

S6 was considered the “black sheep” of the family. His two overachieving brothers made S6 feel like he was an underachiever, and he felt that his parents viewed him in that way. In his adulthood, S6 became a proficient seducer of women, an overachiever in that domain. He was envied by other guys for his skill in seducing women, and that made him feel accomplished.

As they reflected on the past, all subjects believed that their sexual addictions brought them closer to God and made them better spiritual men. For many, the struggles that had burdened them in the past became blessings because they were better Christians in the present.

Spatial Reflection (Lived Space)

All subjects created separate spaces for their sexual lives, their spiritual lives, and their marital lives. When subjects were traveling for work or were able to get some time by themselves where they were separate from church and family life, that created freedom to sexually gratify themselves outside of the expectations of religious morality. S1 would line up escort services and schedule his travels around his mistress’s availability. S2 would find comfort with female travel companions when he was away for work. In the military, he would sexually engage with women from port to port, hiding his affairs from everyone. S3 would plan his online pornography browsing around his wife’s and son’s absence from the house and when his wife was asleep. S4 would use work as an excuse to not come home so that he could create a space to sexually gratify himself while S5 utilized work courses as an excuse to frequent strip clubs and massage parlors, and S6 engaged in numerous affairs with women from work. When subjects were in their separate sexual free spaces, some would experience feelings of guilt and shame over what

they were doing but all continued with their behaviors. The separation allowed them to compartmentalize their morally unacceptable sexual lives into hidden compartments where no one in their moral lives knew about their behaviors. When they felt stress in their marital lives, subjects used their secret sexual lives to help them to cope. Creation of these separate spaces enabled subjects to escape, and when one space started to get to be too overwhelming, subjects had two other spaces available that could give them relief. All subjects were very involved in their churches and acted as spiritual leaders in various positions. For many, their spiritual status gave them a sense of feeling moral and good. When the guilt or shame over their secret sexual lives bothered them, they could escape to their spiritual spaces and receive reinforcement that they were good men.

As the three spaces started to converge because of exposure, and subjects felt significant consequences heading their way, all subjects decided to change. The spatial separation became a union, and because of the conflict that the sexual space had with the spiritual space and marital space, subjects had to make a choice, and all subjects chose to renounce their secret sexual lives. All subjects confessed their behavior to their wives with the exception of S6.

Relational Reflection (Lived Human Relation)

All subjects experienced conflicted family events during their childhood. Though S5 offered vague information about his family upbringing, his comments did not suggest a particularly favorable childhood. S5 was weepy each time he talked about his father and seemed ambivalent when he discussed his relationship with his mother. His childhood suggested a strict upbringing, a distant mother, and a lack of emotional connection with his parents. S1, S2, S3, S4, and S6 all had absent fathers and S1 and S2 felt a void due to

their absent fathers while S3 and S4 felt anger about their fathers' separation and behaviors. S6 did not comment about his feelings towards his father or mother, but he felt that both of his parents singled him out as the "black sheep" of the family.

With the exception of S5, who felt he did not have a problem, all subjects thought that getting married would solve their problems with sexual issues. They formed an impression about their wives before they even knew who they were. To the subjects, their wives would be the answer to their problems and would be able to correct their sexual indiscretions. Most subjects thought that the sex in their marriage would be more exciting and/or more frequent. S1 prayed for a wife throughout college because he felt he would not feel immoral sexual urges after he got married. To S1, sex with his wife would be like the pornographic performances he had grown so used to. S2 thought that his need to feel good about himself through sexual conquests would come to an end after he got married. When they did not, he became resentful towards his wife. S3 and S4 both thought that their wives would meet their sexual needs whenever they wanted, and when the sex was not as frequent as they imagined, both continued to sexually act out to meet their sexual needs. S6 thought that marriage would end his masturbation and pornography use, but when marriage failed in that capacity, he continued to masturbate to pornographic images. Because of the variety he was getting from pornography, S6's monogamous relationship with his wife became mundane for him after nine years, and he started having affairs with other women. S5 did not discuss having any unrealistic expectations of either of his wives, but when the sex decreased in both relationships, S5 increased his secret sexual behavior. In his first marriage, he would go to massage parlors and strip clubs to satisfy

his sexual urges. In his second marriage, he utilized adult book stores for sexual gratification.

Most subjects had trouble in their marriages from the beginning, and those issues increased as other problems were created in ongoing marriage. Subjects escaped into their sexual lives as a way to avoid dealing with the problems between them and their wives. As older problems continued to be ignored, new problems arose, and the stress grew along with increased familial responsibilities. Subjects continued to escape from their marriage relationships, and the married couples lived two separate emotional lives. All subjects used sexual acts as a way to escape their stressors in life. S1 would fantasize at night to escape financial and other daily stressors, S2 and S6 had affairs when the stress of their marriages overwhelmed them, S3 and S4 would masturbate to pornography to escape the stressors of their family lives as children. S5 and S6 would use sexual activities to escape the stress over their decreasing marital sex-lives.

Most subjects used sexual activity as a way to feel worthy. S1 started to masturbate more when he felt that his friends abandoned him in college. S2 continued to pursue girls in high school and felt better about himself with each sexual conquest. S6 also felt good about himself with his female conquests and was proud to be able to seduce beautiful women. S4 would masturbate to pornographic magazines as a child to feel loved and secure because he did not feel that from his family. When S5 felt like he was a failure in his marriage, he would attend strip clubs and feel better about himself because the dancers were performing for him.

Wives continued to grow angry about their husbands' irresponsibility and emotional distance. The expectation of spiritual leadership was often a contentious

subject that wives would bring up when subjects were not acting the way that both knew God would want them to act as married men. Just like S6's description of his marriage, S5 described his first marriage as two people "existing" and emotionally distant, but S5 stated that his second marriage was very close and positive. S5 continued to act out sexually throughout his second wife's bout with breast cancer though he did not comment on his sexual acting out as a coping mechanism. S5 seemed to be very protective of his second marriage and continued to remain vague about any details between him and his second wife. Just like when he talked about his father, S5 was also weepy each time he discussed his relationship with his second wife.

The God Bond

With the exception of S6, who depended on his will-power, all subjects depended on God to change them and to take their immoral sexual desires away. S5 continues to depend on God to take away his sexual temptations and keep him sober and feels that God is doing that presently. S1 and S2 pled with God continuously and felt angry with God that He did not take their sexual desires away. All subjects used their relationships with God as a way to continue their sexual behaviors. S1 assumed that he was going to go to hell, so he used that thought as a rationalization to continue his sexual acts. S2 continuously prayed to God to stop him from sexually engaging with a woman but would ultimately act out when God did not take away his desire. He would then pray for forgiveness as he was overwhelmed by his guilt and shame. S3, S5, and S6 used God's continued forgiveness as a way to wash themselves from their sin each time they acted out and then they would continue with their behaviors. S4 would feel so overwhelmed by guilt because he knew that he had sinned against God that he would immediately use

another sexual outlet to momentarily forget about how he had wronged God. As the momentary relief disintegrated, guilt would overcome him, and S4 would find another sexual act to relieve his guilt and shame.

All subjects reinterpreted their relationship with and understanding of God in a way that worked better for them. S1 learned not to have such high expectations of himself because of the literal interpretations of the Bible. He understood that the high expectations were present in the Bible, but he also embraced the concept of God's mercy. He understood that he was a sinful being and that he did not have to be perfect to be a good person. S2 discussed his renewed sex-life with his wife and stated that they were now worshiping God through their sexual experiences together. Because of his past experiences, S2's marital sex-life was now molded by his adoration of God and an appreciation of his wife. Sex was no longer only about physical pleasure, but rather, it was about emotional closeness to his wife and worship of God. S3 and S4 both felt that their addictions were part of God's plan, and without their addictions they would not have such a deep dependence on God, a dependence that they both value. Their addictions no longer served as burdens but were gifts from God. S5 and S6 created a dependence on God to help them avoid sexual acting out where before they would act before praying and then would pray for forgiveness after completing sexual acts. S5 grew a dependence on God to stop his urges just like the other subjects, but he did not put a lot of the responsibility on himself like the other subjects. S5's journey seemed to stop where he depended on God for Him to take his sexual temptations away, knowing that he may act out if God failed to take sexual urges from him. S5's current dependence on his personal will power was the second component of his change through time. Even though

S5 felt that he was doing well, his vague and often weepy comments throughout his interview suggested little substantiation of his positive assertions.

All subjects grew a deep dependence on God after they sought help through recovery programs. Though all subjects discussed continued problems in their marriage, with the exception of S5, they developed a relationship with God that helped them cope with the stressors in their marriage. The relationship with God was included as a necessary part of the marital bond. When problems arose between the spouses, subjects asked God to change the situation or to help them see what they were doing wrong. For S1 and S3, subjects whose wives did not share their faith, God was a necessary component in the marriage, but subjects had a separate relationship with God (rather than a triadic relationship of husband, wife, and God), and subjects continued to try to incorporate their concept of God into their marriage. For all subjects, God was the necessary constituent in their marriages, even in the bedroom.

General Structure

The General Structure moves away from the everyday perspectives of the subjects. The focus is on the discussion of the existential-phenomenological themes that are implicit in the specifics of all subjects' descriptions of their experiences. All major existential-phenomenological themes are united into a cohesive general description of the evangelical sexually-addicted male.

The evangelical self-identified sexual addict lives through compartmentalized worlds: the religious or spiritual world, the committed relationship or marital world, and the sexual world. Sexual expression is initially understood through a regimented outlook which produces a conflicted sexual exploration phase. To deal with the opposing

concepts of biological urges and spiritual sexual purity expectations, these men divide personal worlds into alternative parts of their lives that they continue to interchange. They feel an urge to sexually explore yet are pulled back by a moral code that states the sinfulness of acting on those urges. Urges often win out, and these men feel an overwhelming sense of guilt that conflicts with the sexual pleasure they receive from acting on their urges. The sexual pleasure they receive from acting on their urges is often coupled with emotional relief and/or affirmation from conflicted childhoods that produced feelings of inadequacy. As their patterns continue, self-identified sexually addicted evangelical men separate their sexual behaviors and their religious faith, a separation that often happens on a sub-conscious level. Religious faith is habitually used as a rationalization for continued sexual behavior, be it anger caused by feeling that God fails them and yet sends hopeless sinners to hell or a constant reliance on God's forgiveness to be cleansed. Marriage is often considered a salvation from men's emotional struggles and an answer to sexual problems. When marriage fails to save these men from their sexual urges and consequently creates more problems, these individuals separate the marriage life into a third space, segregating it from the spiritual space and the sexual space they created.

As the sexual behaviors carry on and moral dilemmas persist, the compartmentalized worlds of self-identified sexually addicted evangelical men become places that they can move back and forth from in an effort to cope with the problem of conflicting worlds. For example, as guilt and shame increase due to their sexual behaviors or due to the way they engage with their wives, spiritual spaces provide these men an outlet to feel like decent people or good Christians. As stresses in marriages

increase, these men are able to move to their sexual spaces to escape and feel relief. Each separate space provides relief from the previous separate space, and the spaces continue to remain detached because they conflict with one another. The spiritual space expects loyal husbands and good fathers, but the marital space provides a place where these men can vent their anger at their wives and/or family. The marital space remains separate from the spiritual space because of the necessity to put on a facade of the perfect husband and father in the spiritual space, two characteristics that are not present in the marital space. The marital space is the rockiest arena, yet it provides a facade for the spiritual space and an area for these men's frustrations to be vented. The sexual space is the primary place of comfort and escape, but it is continuously laden with guilt and shame because of religious faith and individual moral codes. As guilt and shame increase, men often run to their spiritual spaces to feel better about themselves, to feel like good people.

These men use their spaces to continue their sexual behaviors, but there is also a necessity to maintain those separations in order to cope with the conflict among them. This is simultaneously shrouded under a veil of silence. For most self-identified sexually addicted evangelical men, shame and guilt of their sexual behaviors encourages silence, while some may try to reach out to their spiritual church leaders, they feel that they receive minimal help, and that minimal help emerges from a place of ignorance rather than judgment. As these men develop in each of their spiritual spaces, the separation of the compartmentalized worlds grows and the consequences of uniting those worlds amplify. Only through the forced convergence of these spaces due to exposure along with the risk of extreme consequences do self-identified evangelical men begin to surrender to

change. The change that is ultimately selected is the elimination of the secret sexual world and the harmonious convergence of the marital and spiritual world.

After wholly surrendering to change, these men willingly grasp on to the concept of sexual addiction as they identify with others in the Christian recovering community and with Christian literature. Sexual addiction becomes an identity that gives them a sense of relief. They no longer feel like bad people because they can define their behavior as an illness and can also identify themselves with other men in the same position. A growing dependence on a recovery program emerges along with a necessary and renewed reliance, appreciation, and understanding of God.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

In this discussion, the Reflection on the General Narrative and the General Structure are dialogued with the literature review. While the literature review has been largely theoretical in nature, the General Structure provides an empirically detailed description of the life-world of the evangelical Christian male who self-identifies as a sexual addict. While related studies have focused on this population in terms of religion and sexuality, this study differs in taking the lived experiences of the individuals as the primary component of the data description and interpretation. Nevertheless, there is much to compare and contrast between what is found in the literature and what is illuminated in the Reflection on the General Narrative and the General Structure of this existential-phenomenological study. Following the dialogue with the literature, limitations of the current research are presented along with recommendations for further research and implications for the counseling field.

Dialogue with the Literature

In this discussion, the Reflection on the General Narrative and the General Structure will be presented in dialogue with the Literature Review. Themes are compared and contrasted in an effort to initiate further understanding of the evangelical Christian male who self-identifies as a sexual addict.

Formalization of Christianity and the Loss of the God-bond

Jung's (1936/1966) understanding that the lost bond with God is attributed to a formalized and institutionalized Christianity emerged throughout this the study. Subjects felt that they had to live up to the stringent Biblical doctrine that their denominational

understanding had formalized. To look at a woman with lust in one's heart was a sin and a disgrace, yet all subjects failed to honor this doctrine in the way that they understood it dogmatically. The formalized understanding of God's rules caused all subjects' initially established bonds with God to deteriorate in different ways; subjects either completely abandoned their bond with God because of their immense guilt over lusting, or they developed a gradual detachment from God, shifting their God-bond from a personal relationship with a savior and spiritual confidant to an engagement with God as a confessional, a source for recurring forgiveness from ongoing sin. Some subjects experienced a combination, praying to God to forgive them while simultaneously feeling overwhelmed by guilt and shame because of ongoing sexual behaviors.

The Shifting Evangelical Movement and the Concept of Absolute Truth

Evangelicalism continues to be better known for its internal differences rather than for its harmony despite a common doctrine, and while the evangelical spectrum spans from varying degrees of conservative stances to more liberal understandings, many evangelicals continue to stand by their individual understanding of dogma as the only truth (Barrett, 2001). For many of the subjects in this study, their individual evangelical stances shifted from understanding God through stringent dogmatic principles to a more lenient understanding of God, a God that was sympathetic to the inherent fallen condition of the human being, and therefore, accepting, patient, and forgiving. For these subjects, the understanding of God shifted from God as judge to God as mentor. God as mentor has a significantly different role from the previous understanding of God (judge), and it enabled subjects to alter their relationship with God. Since the evangelical movement encompasses varying religious stances on dogma that are based on social and cultural

understandings, this allowed the subjects within this movement to shift their spiritual understandings to suit their personal life-worlds while still remaining within the universal and mutual evangelical doctrine.

Sexual Morality & Sexual Addiction

Throughout history, Christian views about sexual morality changed depending on the dogma of the Christian institution. Evangelicals rejected the concept that sex was only to be engaged in for procreation and celebrated sexuality as the need to be fruitful and multiply (Grenz, 1997; Horowitz, 2002). As the emphasis on euphoria of sex heightened through the Enlightenment and into this century, evangelicals rebelled against the growing emphasis on the primacy of sexual pleasure, creating a renewed concept of sexual morality, a morality that is largely conservative and based on a celibate life until marriage. Though all subjects in this study engaged in sexual activities for pleasure, including emotional affirmation as well as carnal gratification, all subjects' beliefs about sexual morality did not waver. Even as their understanding of God changed, sex was still viewed the same way throughout, as a union that is permitted only within a heterosexual marriage. Lusting, defined as a sexual craving of something forbidden by God (Harris, 2003; Harris, 2004) continued to be understood as a sin that should be avoided at all costs. Subjects were continually conflicted by their sexual urges even from young ages. The childhood sexual exploration was often turned to shame. As subjects yearned to explore their bodies through masturbation and sexual relationships, the concept of lust conflicted with the freedom to explore their sexuality. Subjects would often hide their behaviors from others because they felt what they were doing was wrong or not normal, despite ongoing urges. Though all subjects continued to lust, be it by looking at women or

through pornography, they now depended on treatment-based or 12 Step regimens to help them change their thinking through cognitive dissonance activities. All subjects were introduced to the concept of sexual addiction through evangelical self-help literature (predominantly Every Man's Battle) and 12 step programs (Sexaholics Anonymous) and only then identified as sexual addicts. All subjects reported ongoing struggles with lust even throughout years of participation in their self-help programs. The need to surrender to self-help structures to curb the inherent existence of lusting may be a dependent cycle since guilt about lusting, for all subjects, has been a recurring emotion throughout their lives. Kwee's (2007) notion that individuals may view unwanted sexual attractions as sicknesses because of their inability to stop those attractions while simultaneously being dependant on self-help structures parallels the experiences of the subjects in this study. Since sexual lust is an inherent emotion with its initial exploration in childhood, can it ever be eliminated from one's life, and if it can not, does the self-help structure that claims that emotion as wrong encourage dependence on it through the sheer male inability to stop lusting? It has seemed to be the case for the subjects of this study.

While sexual addiction is rooted in shame, religious dogma often contributes to the shame cycle. Out of fear and condemnation, individuals may hide certain kinds of sexual behaviors or urges that are viewed as sinful and isolate (Nelson, 2003). Subjects in this study created three life-worlds where they were able to isolate themselves when they engaged in certain behaviors that did not fit into their other life-worlds. Subjects had convinced themselves that they could not change and so they tried to escape from the distressful uncertainties of their lives by creating compartmentalized life-worlds,

paralleling Fischer's (1985) concept of self-deception as the "flight from the anxiously distressing ambiguities of one's life" (p. 152).

Gender Roles

Ongoing debates about gender roles and the hierarchical marital view of male over female continue among evangelicals (Grenz, 1997), and though some evangelicals question the claim that the woman was originally assigned a subsidiary status, most conservative evangelicals ignore the argument and place the male as the head of the house. Exactly how that male is supposed to function as leader, however, is widely disputed and seems to be dependent on individual interpretation. Most subjects in this study felt that they had to be leaders of their households yet they did not know how to lead and how to interact with their families as leaders, and they did not receive any specific religious guidance about such leadership. Subjects understood it as their Biblical expectation but did not know exactly how to carry out the role. Contention grew between husband and wife because wives often felt that their husbands did not fulfill their leadership roles appropriately, and subjects grew frustrated with their marriages and frequently felt inadequate as men. Their extra-marital sexual behaviors allowed them to escape and to feel validated as men. After the subjects decided to obtain help for their sexual behaviors and aligned with a recovery program, many still saw a need to establish their role as leader of the house and worked with their spouses to shape that role. Others considered their spouses primary leaders and did not feel responsible for being the heads of their households. Despite the categorization of male as leader or female as leader, each subject's leader role varied greatly from the other. Where one subject divided leadership roles with his wife, financial responsibilities being male and caring for children being

female, another subject understood his role as being a supporter of his wife while another subject became a spiritual witness to his wife and his child.

The Saving Grace of Marriage

The importance placed on waiting to have sex until marriage is still a strong case in evangelical literature (Gresh, 2007; Elliot, 2006; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2003; Alcorn, 2003; Graham, 1984), while the marital bond is often described in a fairytale manner, as is the case in Gresh's description of her marriage being "more than [they] hoped for" (p. 14). The idealization of marriage was also present in most of the study's subjects' experiences. Marriage was seen as something that would eliminate their lustful urges for other women as well as their sexual urges caused by pornographic images. They felt that they would be emotionally, sexually, and spiritually fulfilled when they met their wives and that marriage would end all of their problems. When that did not happen, problems arose, resentments grew, and often blaming behaviors began. Many men blamed their wives for not meeting their sexual urges, and they seemed to have fashioned sexual roles for their wives prior to meeting them. The expectations subjects placed on their future wives paralleled the roles that are fashioned for women in much of the evangelical literature where the wife's responsibility is to satisfy her husband's sexual urges (White, 1993; Morgan 1990; Dobson, 1980), possibly contributing to the unrealistic expectation that one's partner is solely responsible to meet one's sexual needs, as frequent or as extravagant as they may be. The hierarchical role placed on women to honor their husbands could also have been a significant factor in subjects' blaming behaviors since hierarchical gender role duties often tend to contribute to blaming when assigned or

presumed gender roles are not being executed by the individuals who were prescribed those roles (Laaser & Gregoire, 2003).

Homosexuality and the Evangelical Sex Addict

All subjects in this study identified as heterosexual men and none admitted to engaging in any kind of homosexual activities. When asked about their views on homosexuality and sexual addiction, all subjects paralleled homosexuality with sexual addiction, indicating that homosexuality was a problem just like their own problematic sexual behaviors. This study may have simply been limited to heterosexual men because of the small sample, but the question of whether there are homosexual evangelical sexual addicts who identify their sexually addictive behaviors as problematic but not necessarily their homosexuality is still a question for this researcher. Do most evangelical sexually addicted homosexual men work towards a healthier same-sex relationship or do they identify their homosexuality as a problem and work towards reforming their same-sex attractions? The issue of reforming homosexuality may seem impossible, but it can be likened to this study's subjects' problems with lust. Subjects, despite their best efforts, continue to lust after women, even after years of recovery-work. Many of the subjects noted that their struggle with lust would not cease, and it would be a constant battle for them. With this similar understanding of heterosexual lust and homosexual behavior, it seems easy, perhaps even natural, to equate the homosexuality problem with the lust problem. Considering conservative evangelical views that homosexual behavior equals sin (Banerjee, 2005), the inability to stop being homosexual could be viewed as irrelevant. Just like heterosexual men who have to struggle with lusting after women, homosexual

men have to continue to struggle with same sex behaviors, and both have to either remain celibate or find happiness with a heterosexual woman.

Freud and the Swaggart Effect

The characterization of evangelicalism as a hypocritical institution (Gamson, 2001) is plausibly attributed to the sex scandals of evangelical leaders such as Jimmy Swaggart and Ted Haggard. However, media often illuminate indiscretions of famous individuals, and the evangelical leaders who were exposed in sex scandals were already in the public eye because of their leadership roles. The question of whether sexual indiscretions correlate some way with evangelical leadership, perhaps through reaction-formation, a defense mechanism in which emotions that produce anxiety or are deemed unacceptable are replaced by opposite emotions that often lead to obsessional behavior (Freud, 1905/2000) may still need further investigation. However, in this study, all subjects were leaders in their churches, taking on roles of mentors (S2), public speakers (S1), elders (S4 and S6), Sunday school teachers (S3), and deacons (S5), and all subjects used their religious status to affirm themselves as righteous men while continuing to sexually act out.

Sartre posited that psychoanalytic language often constrained the understanding of certain phenomena and that the majority of issues were indicative of who a person was as a human being and of the environment in which that person existed (1943/1984). The environment of all subjects in this study seemed to have a substantial effect on the aforementioned reaction formation parallel. Though all subjects served in leadership capacities, none of the subjects (with the exception of S1's public speech) imposed leadership roles on themselves. S2 was approached by various men in his church to

counsel them on the sexual struggles they were having, S3 was asked to be a Sunday school teacher by one of the members of his church, S4 and S6 were elected as church elders by their denominations while S5 was elected a deacon in his church by members. In some sense, the subjects' church environments imposed characteristics on these men that held connotations of honor and respect, and the reaction formation parallel was an act that was participatory rather than individual.

Sartre and Personal Responsibility

The impossibility of escaping one's one responsibility (Sartre, 1943/1984) was an emerging theme for all subjects in this study. Initially, subjects depended on God to take their urges away and when God failed them, they felt victimized. They did not understand why they were burdened with lustful feelings and why they could not stop themselves from acting out. Subjects felt that it was God's responsibility to correct their behavior or redeem them of it. God's unwillingness to lift their sexual burdens enabled subjects to understand themselves as victims, helpless in the face of lust and powerless to stop their behaviors. Though guilt and shame was oppressing for some, placing the responsibility on God to change them enabled subjects to continue their behaviors. Each subject's choice to hold on to his sexual world was made possible through choosing not to change his current situation, and this choice was rationalized through the victim-role created by the understanding that God failed him. Only after subjects were exposed and faced with considerable consequences did subjects choose to make another choice – reform.

Becker and Three Life-Worlds

According to Becker (1973), individuals with sexual issues strive to be whole, and this wholeness that they seek is ontological rather than sexual. Feeling complete in

oneself as well as being unified with one's life-world is the ontological goal for all human beings. Subjects in this study found it difficult to feel whole because their sexual desires did not harmonize with their spiritual beliefs. As they acted out on their sexual urges while continuing to align with a disapproving dogma, they gradually created a separation in their life-world; a division of religious-world and sexual-world occurred. In their striving for ontological wholeness, many subjects depended on God to take away their sexual-world, and after God's consistent failure, marriage was looked at as their salvation from conflicting life-worlds. After they were married, subjects believed that their secret sexual-worlds would cease to exist because their wives would enter that sexual role and their sexual behaviors would be dogmatically legitimate. When wives failed to accomplish this goal, subjects created a third world, their marriage-world, a world that did not harmonize with their spiritual world because of its flaws (blaming, fighting, lying, etc.), flaws that were often created or exacerbated by each subject's choice to remain in the secret sexual-world.

Revising Conceptual Assumptions

The first assumption of this researcher was that most subjects would be conservative evangelicals and view homosexual behaviors as unacceptable. This assumption was validated as subjects discussed their disapproval of homosexual behaviors. S6, however, went to church with a homosexual male couple, and his hesitancy to judge the couple as sinful was surprising to this researcher. It is likely that S6's restraint of judgment of this couple was the result of his tacit desire that his own sexual behavior is not judged by others. Another presupposition was that some of the subjects would have had significant stress in their marital relationships prior to exhibiting

sexual addictive behaviors. Many subjects exhibited compulsive sexual behavior prior to their marriages. The stress of the marital relationship was not the causal factor of subjects' sexual behaviors. Most subjects experienced feelings of inadequacy and used sex as a way to feel better about themselves. Problems in subjects' marriages often arose because of their secretive sexual behaviors, and marriage stress was not evidenced to be the causal factor of subjects' sexual behaviors. However, marital stressors exacerbated subjects' ongoing sexual behaviors. Subjects were also assumed to have fairly rigid belief systems about what sexuality should look like in the eyes of God. While some subjects discussed being raised in religious families, the rigidity regarding sexuality was not a consistent factor across all subjects' experiences. The factor that was consistent in all subjects' family lives, however, was the emotional absence of a parent. Five subjects discussed their experiences of having an absent father, and one discussed an absent mother. While some subjects experienced chaotic or abusive family lives, the existence of a chaotic or abusive family upbringing could not be generalized to all subjects' childhood experiences. This researcher presumed that subjects would have a pattern of consistently seeking guidance of their church leaders on sexual matters, and this was not often the case. Only two of the six subjects sought church guidance for sexual issues. Others solely depended on their dogmatic concept of sexual morality. The assumption that subjects would have confusion over gender roles was evidenced in only half of the subjects' experiences, but reaction-formation as a contributive factor was present for all subjects. The primary postulation that initial assumptions of this researcher would be challenged and/or altered by hearing the subjects' lived experiences was present. The most surprising finding for this researcher was that all subjects served in leadership roles in their

religious-worlds. Though the assumption of reaction-formation was certainly present, this researcher assumed that most subjects would increase their involvement in their churches in terms of volume (attending church more often) rather than hierarchy (spiritual leader for others). The final unexpected finding was that all subjects chose to remain married; of course, this could have been purely coincidental due to the small sample size. That subjects chose to remain married did not astonish this researcher as much as the nature of some subjects' current marital relationships. It would be expected that all marriages would experience difficulty in healing because of subjects' infidelities but that subjects accepted that they may never be trusted again by their spouses was an unforeseen finding. Though all subjects admitted to having ongoing problems in their marriages (with the exception of S5 who remained vague), some subjects' marital relationships seemed exceptionally malevolent.

Limitations

The theoretical constraints of the methodology, while illuminating many of the lived experiences of the evangelical Christian self-identified sexually addicted male, may not have allowed for an exhaustive interpretation of the phenomenon being studied because of the broad nature of the questions being asked. Subjects discussed decades of personal experiences in the total of two hours each, so the assumption that other themes could have emerged with more interviews is realistic. However, due to the time constraints of the researcher and subjects, limitations in thematic interpretation may have limited this study.

The sample size of six subjects may have further limited this study and, though this researcher reached saturation in data analysis, a larger pool of subjects may have

provided more themes or may have caused less generalizable themes to become more generalizable than permitted by this researched population. For example, only two out of six subjects stated that they sought help from their church leaders, and this theme was not assumed to be a generality of the researched population. A larger sample size may have established this subject as an applicable theme in the general population, however. That all subjects identified as heterosexual and denied any homosexual activity limited this study since data about homosexual behaviors of evangelical Christian self-identified sexual addicts could not be analyzed.

Finally, the fact that all subjects attended Every Man's Battle and/or Sexaholics Anonymous, two very conservative organizations, may have limited the research. Interviewing evangelical subjects that attended other more liberal recovery programs such as Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous may have altered some findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

In terms of the subjects in this study, none discussed engagement in homosexual behaviors. As stated in the literature review, there are many evangelicals who identify as homosexuals, and there are also many evangelical organizations that try to reform homosexuals. A study on the evangelical Christian male who identifies as a sexual addict and has engaged in same-sex behaviors would illuminate how homosexual behavior is understood by the evangelical male, and could be compared and contrasted to the results of this study. Does the concept of lust parallel homosexual behavior in the recovery experience of the evangelical Christian male who identifies as a sexual addict who has engaged in same-sex behaviors? Is there an acceptance of homosexuality for this population?

A similar study about the lived experiences of the spouses of evangelical Christian men who self identify as sexual addicts would further illuminate the phenomenon studied in this research. How did spouses deal with their husbands' behaviors? What role did religion play in their decisions to continue with their marriages throughout constant struggles? Researching subjects who are actively sexually acting out and identify as sexual addicts would also bring further explanation to this population and enrich the information provided in this study.

It was interesting to find that all subjects in this study chose to stay in their marriages despite ongoing struggles for many of them years after recovery, particularly in the area of trust. Further research on this topic would be useful in illuminating this population's reasons for staying married to wives who continue to distrust them years into recovery. The reciprocal of that research would be to illuminate the spouses' reasons for staying in a marriage that they do not feel secure in. What role does religion play in these decisions? What role does guilt play? Do subjects stay in difficult marriages because they feel a need to be punished? Do spouses stay as a way to chastise their husbands for past wrongs?

Finally, achieving racial and ethnic diversity in this study was not accomplished since all participants in this study were Caucasian. The homogeneity of the subjects in terms of race and ethnicity limits the ability of this study to speak to the interplay between culture and the lived experiences of evangelical Christian men who self-identify as sexual addicts experience.

Implications for the Counseling Field

This research illuminated the lived experiences of evangelical Christian males who self-identify as sexual addicts as lived through three compartmentalized life-worlds. The separation of these life worlds was necessary for subjects to continue with their sexual behaviors, and hiding each life-world from the other supported ongoing acting out for all subjects.

Focusing on Communication to Avoid Exposure

Though not all subjects participated in marriage counseling, some did while they were sexually acting out. All subjects that participated in treatment did not disclose their behaviors during marital counseling. The focus on communication of husband and wife was primary in all of the subjects' counseling experiences, and because of this, all subjects avoided disclosure and focused on being better communicators. It seemed relatively easy for all subjects to avoid disclosing their infidelities in marital counseling because the focus could be diverted to working on better communication. Some subjects disclosed some of their sexual behaviors in counseling sessions but avoided disclosing information that their wives were unaware of. While not exclusive to evangelicals, lack of fully disclosing information can often be an issue in marital counseling, and the primary focus on learning how to communicate may be an easy way for sexual addicts to avoid changing their problematic sexual behaviors.

An Essential Relationship with God

With evangelicals, the personal relationship with God is an inextricable component of their lives. To be evangelical, one must have a relationship with God. Subjects who cut off their communion with God did not consider themselves to be

evangelicals during their absence from God. Two subjects (S5 and S6) had two dates of salvation because they strayed from God and were re-saved (born-again). Another subject considered himself to be saved throughout his life (S1), but through the years he discussed getting re-saved several times as he strayed from his relationship with God. Counselors who treat this population must be sensitive to the inextricable relationship that evangelicals have with God and incorporate that relationship in counseling.

For many evangelicals, if there is a conflict between what is experientially or reasonably known and what is found “in revelation, there is no question as to who has the last word. [Revelation prevails, and evangelicals] must stand corrected by God” (Knitter, 1985, p. 91). The understanding of God’s revelation, however, is highly subjective, and Biblical interpretations may not always be clear. In evangelical marriages, God is an essential third party of the marital bond. Evangelical couples dialogue with God and depend on God to help them resolve marital issues. Counselors should not minimize the relationship a couple has with God because it defines how they relate to each other. Asking a couple what they think God thinks of the current situation or how they engage with each other serves as a useful tool to help the couple to illuminate their ideals and what they want to strive to achieve. In most circumstances, evangelical couples co-create their understanding of their relationship with God and what standards God has for them as a couple. The subjectivity of God’s revelation is formulated through personal understanding, and counselors need to discover what each couples’ and client’s understanding of this revelation is in order to effectively help. Including God as part of the dialogue in counseling should never be discounted, even if the counselor is not of the same faith, because the understanding of God is the clients’, not the counselor’s.

Evangelical Faith as Culture

Though counselors who treat evangelical clients do not need to ascribe to the same dogmatic principles, they do need to understand the culture of their evangelical client as they would try to understand any other client's culture. Just like other cultures, the evangelical movement contains subcultures along its continuum. Where some evangelicals claim an ecumenical status, believing in the importance of extensive ecumenical cooperation with other Christians and retreating from the belief that the Bible is absolutely without error (Knitter, 1985), others may identify with a Fundamentalist evangelical view, maintaining the inerrant verbal inspiration of the Bible, virgin birth, miracles of Christ, physical resurrection, total depravity of the human being, substitutionary atonement, and the second coming of Christ (Knitter). Because evangelicals have historically had strong beliefs about sexual morality, growing divergent evangelical belief systems spur debate within the evangelical community, and counselors must educate themselves on the evangelical cultures of the clients they are working with. Otherwise, the process of counseling may feel antagonistic or unsuitable to the client (Sue & Sue, 1990).

Sexual Anorexia

Counselors also need to be aware of the possibility that evangelical client who self-identify as sexual addicts may become sexually anorexic. Sexual anorexia could become just as problematic as the initial sexual behaviors the client has been struggling with (Carnes, 1997). Evangelicals who struggle with sexual behaviors that are deemed sinful or immoral often deal with feelings of guilt and shame. In an effort to stop behaving in ways that are sinful, evangelical clients may deprive themselves of all sexual

contact, inclusive of sexual contact that is deemed moral or absent of sin. The restricted behavior may increase the risk for sexual bingeing or failing to develop healthy sexual habits (Delmonico, Griffin, & Carnes, 2002). Counselors may prescribe a period of sexual abstinence while clients initially engage in the counseling process, but denying all future sexual activity should be strongly discouraged (Delmonico, Griffin, & Carnes).

Identifying Sexual Addiction

In some sense, all clients followed Gold and Heffner's (1998) proposed progression of sexual addiction. All clients felt anxiety or stress about a certain situation and used sexual behaviors to reduce the distress that they felt. The distress was temporarily alleviated for all subjects. For many subjects, feelings of either guilt or shame about their sexual behavior prompted further distress and so they engaged in sexual behaviors to alleviate their feelings of guilt and shame. Other subjects did not experience a cycle of guilt specific to their secret sexual behaviors but acted out when they felt distressed about other things, such as feeling unworthy or feeling stressed in the marital relationship. While some subjects' religious beliefs plagued their consciences and increased feelings of shame and guilt, others used their religious beliefs as redemptive elements, they sinned because they could be forgiven by God over and over again. Not all subjects seemed to meet Goodman's (1992) criteria for sexual addiction, but all subjects felt that they were sexually addicted and followed the addictive cycle (Gold & Heffner, 1998).

If clients see their sexual behaviors as pathological despite not being able to get "well" on their own, they may grow dependent in the belief that their "sickness" will continue. Often, they conform to a structure or a program that confirms their perceived

pathology (Kwee, 2007). Alternately, evangelical clients may feel so ashamed about their sexual behaviors that they develop behaviors that are viewed as addictive because of the rituals, secrecy, and hiding they entail. The “relapses” into certain sexual behaviors may reinforce the belief that they are sexual addicts (Kwee). Because the stigmatized and prohibited nature of certain sexual behaviors and urges often leads to ongoing secrecy and deception (Brownfain, 1985), many evangelicals behave in the same way as “diagnosed” sexual addicts without meeting the criteria of sexual addiction. Refuting a client’s self-proclaimed sexual addiction or sexual pathology may not be helpful to someone who strongly sees his sexual behavior as pathological and suffers insurmountable guilt and shame because of it.

Counseling in an Existential-Phenomenological Context

In helping clients understand who they are and who they would like to become, counselors must first dismiss moral superiority and abandon the notion that a particular point of view or way of operating is just a little bit better or truer than another (Parry & Doan, 1994). Instead, counselors should work entirely within the humble realization that in the realm which counseling takes place, everything is interpretation (Parry & Doan, 1994); clients create their own reality. The counselor, however, should be responsible for confronting the client’s choices and viewpoints with a realistic world-view. That is, clients must be confronted with the consequences of choices as they process how they want to live their lives.

The goal of counseling is two-fold, to help individuals realize that 1) they are essentially free beings; they can choose the life they live. In fact, they *must* choose their lives because even in choosing not to choose and letting the circumstances of existence

dominate how they live, individuals choose to be the victims of their lives (Sartre, 1984). Counselors must also help clients realize that 2) through their choices, clients unavoidably face the consequences of those choices because they are inextricably linked to the world in which they live and are always within the circumstances of existence; there is no being without being-there, in the world and among others (Heidegger, 1962).

To place clients as the primary controllers of their decisions while simultaneously helping them change past detrimental decision-making patterns into more beneficial decision-making patterns, therapists must help clients realize that life intrinsically limits possibilities. Counselors should consistently confront clients with the notion that when they make one choice, they essentially give up other choices, and therefore, a compromise is essential (between their urges and the consequences of acting on those urges). Clients can choose to live the lives they desire but only within the limitations of existence.

Through this investigation, counselors were also provided with a detailed reflection of this population's life-world through corporeal, temporal, spatial, and relational reflections. It is the hope of this researcher that counselors will find useful information from this investigation in helping this population, particularly through the idea that individuals are always in the world and in the circumstances of existence (Heidegger, 1962), searching for wholeness (Becker, 1973) and inevitably needing to be faced with their personal responsibility in life (Sartre, 1943/1984) on their journey to healing.

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APPENDIX A

Duquesne University

An Investigation of the Lived Experiences of Evangelical Christian Men Who Self-Identify as Sexual Addicts

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

You are being invited to participate in a research study that seeks to investigate the lived experience of evangelical Christian men who self-identify as sexual addicts. You will be asked to participate in one focus group with several other men (approximately 90 minutes) and participate in a follow-up individual interview (approximately 60 minutes). The topic of both interviews is your experiences of being an evangelical male who self-identifies as a sexual addict. The interviews will be video-taped and/or audio-taped.

In order to participate you must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Must be at least 18 years of age.
- 2) Must identify as an evangelical Christian.
- 3) Must identify as a sexual addict.

Your Confidentiality

This study is not affiliated with any group, and no one will know you are participating, other than the researcher and other participants in the focus group. Reporting of the results will not include any identifiers. All personal identifiers will be removed by the researcher, and all audio and video tapes will be destroyed immediately after the study.

If you are interested in participating in this study or would like more information, please contact:

Kailla Edger at:
412-498-1629
DUresearch@yahoo.com

All communication is confidential.

APPENDIX B

Screening

Subjects must:

- 1) be 18 years of age or older
- 2) meet the criteria for evangelical Christians
- 3) self-identify as recovering sexual addicts
- 4) use the same language as the researcher (English)

The criteria to qualify as an evangelical Christian are beliefs in:

- 1) the absolute authority of biblical scripture as a source of knowledge of God and how to live a Christian life
- 2) Jesus Christ as God incarnate and the savior of sinful humankind
- 3) the lordship of the Holy Spirit
- 4) the necessity of personal conversion (being born-again)
- 5) the need to evangelize both individually and as a church
- 6) the importance of the communion of Christians for spiritual sustenance, fellowship, and development.

APPENDIX C

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

After a brief introduction about the focal point of the research, the focus group (or subject) will be asked to describe their lived experiences as if to someone who had never heard of sexually addicted relationships.

The queries that frame the discussion will be:

1. Describe your sexual addiction.
2. Has your religion had an impact on your sexual addiction?
 3. **If not**, discuss how your religion has remained separate from your sexual addiction.
 4. **If so**, give an example of a time where your religion had an impact on your sexual addiction.
5. Has your religion had an impact on your views about sexuality?
 6. **If not**, give examples of how your religion remained separate from your views about sexuality.
 7. **If so**, give an example of a time where your religion had a helpful impact on your views about sexuality.
 8. **If so**, give an example of a time where your religion had a harmful impact on your views about sexuality.

APPENDIX D



DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: The Lived Experience of Evangelical Christian Men Who Self-Identify as Sexual Addicts

INVESTIGATOR: Kailla Edger
3205 McConnell Street
Aliquippa, PA 15001
412-498-1629

ADVISOR: (if applicable:) David Delmonico, Ph.D.
Duquesne University
School of Education
Dept. of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education, 412-396-4032

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision at Duquesne University.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the lived experience of evangelical Christian men who self-identify as sexual addicts. You will be asked to participate in a focus group interview and a follow-up individual interview. Your lived experiences of being an evangelical male who self-identifies as sexually addicted will be the topic. The interviews will be audio and video-taped and transcribed. The group interview will last approximately 90-120 minutes, and the individual interview will last approximately 60 minutes. If you choose not to participate in the focus group interview for any reason, you may participate in an individual interview with the researcher (approximately 90 minutes) and a follow-up individual interview (approximately 60 minutes); both will be tape-recorded.

These are the only requests that will be made of you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:

The risks may include emotional discomfort created from discussing your sexual addiction. A risk may exist that confidential information may be disclosed by other group members in the focus group. Other risks involved are no greater than those encountered in everyday life. This study is not affiliated with any group and no one will know you are participating other than the researcher and other participants in the focus group.

COMPENSATION:

Participants will not be compensated in any way. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All research materials (written and taped) will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home. The video-taped and audio-taped discussion parts of the session will be transcribed, and I will remove all identifying material of you and any others that you talk about. Final data that is reported will be drawn from the transcriptions without identifiers. Audio and video tapes will be destroyed immediately after they are transcribed; all other research materials will be kept for a period of no more than five years following the completion of research. The information in this research study will be held confidential by the researcher, although, due to the participation in a focus group, the researcher cannot guarantee that subjects' information will remain confidential among its group members.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw at any time.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Kailla Edger at 412-498-1629 or by e-mail at kdrozdek@comcast.net, Dr. David Delmonico at 412-396-4032 or by e-mail at delmonico@duq.edu, or Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board, at 412-396-6326.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX E

S1 Edited Synthesis

I: Can you discuss the nature of your sexual addiction?

S1: I remember, probably about 12 or 13 years old, I found a pornographic magazine under my father's bed or dresser or something like that. As soon as I saw the pictures of a nude woman looking at me, it produced some kind of spark or energy in me. I used to think back and forth all the time, wanting to see that image and view that. Shortly after that, a friend told me about masturbation, so I would masturbate to those images and it was the best thing since sliced bread as far as I was concerned at the time. That was at a young age, probably 12, 13, somewhere around there. That was my first experience with it because my parents never talked to me about sex. Never, it was always, you know, bits and pieces and trying to find out about it, and then actually being able to stare at that woman looking at me. That produced a draw inside of me. And then after that when I learned how to masturbate and it felt really good, and that was my secret that I was doing for a long time throughout high school. As I was getting into high school, I was obviously enthralled by the opposite sex and hearing people talk about sex which I really didn't know about. I actually didn't have sex in high school, but I noticed that I was drawn to masturbation, continually, almost every day. When I got out of high school, got a little older, I remember going to a peep show down in [city name].

I: How old were you?

S1: 18. yeah, and back then they would have these movie theatres too where you would pay a quarter and you could see a video or something like that. So, I would sneak into that, even though I was underage, I would always want to sneak and see what I was missing. I never really had access to the internet back then or to dirty movies or anything

like that. When I was 18, I actually saw a sex show in [city name] and that really resonated with me too because I hadn't had physical intimacy but I really wanted to. In high school, I never went all the way with a girl but it was constantly on my mind, but I couldn't do it because being a Christian, I knew that you just can't do that.

I: Have sex?

S1: Yes, absolutely. I went away to college. I actually went away to [college name], a Christian school, and I started having some problems **like relationship issues with females, break-up with girls that I thought were pretty serious. Also friends, people that I thought were my friends, and then things happened and I felt all alone and abandoned up there.** So, I remember that masturbation was just overtaking me. I really never did too much outside of that, but it was a two, three, four times a day habit. I wouldn't say I was an addict at the time, I just still thought I had these urges that I had to meet. I remember distinctly praying, sophomore, junior year to send me a wife, asking God to send me a wife because I felt guilty about what I was doing.

I: About masturbating?

S1: Yes, uh huh. I had fantasies and images and wanting to take advantage of girls. I remember the movie *Ten*, was out at the time with Bo Derek and just the fantasy of her, and I was living inside of my head a lot of times but not really doing much outside of things like that. So I did end up getting a wife, and that didn't help. Intimacy with her wasn't what I thought it was going to be. At least from a physical stand point. Later, I found out that my wife had no chance because I brought this into the marriage, and it wasn't about her; it was about me. I would always start to dabble, and I started to travel, and after I started to travel, the yellow pages were in the phone book, and I actually

called an escort. I called an escort. Actually if we back up, around seven years into my marriage at that time, the internet had come out. So, I was starting to dabble in internet pornography and it was consuming a lot of my time. But I still couldn't cross the line. I couldn't go any further than that.

I: You mean, cross the line as far as physical contact with someone else?

S1: Right. Yeah, I thought it was okay because I'm masturbating and I'm just having fantasies, but I'm not cheating. I'm not cheating on my wife. Seventh year, I went to a bachelor party and this woman was performing at the party and she was performing sexual acts in the back. I was drunk, went in the back, had sexual acts performed on me. Felt good. Went home, didn't say anything, didn't get caught. That opened it up then – Hey wait a minute, I didn't get caught! So it was these fantasies and everything, all this behavior that I wanted actually happened and it was like I was able to separate that. Go home and just be completely numb to my wife and nothing happened. And then when I started to travel and get some money, I started going to strip joints. You know when those women there are live and you let them touch you and do a few things and fantasize about them, but never really wanting to do anything but fantasy, but it started the ball rolling because the masturbation was always there. Now all of a sudden, it went from the internet to live. I think it was after about a year of traveling, I finally called an escort. She came and performed sex , and I didn't get caught. But the very first time it happened, I caught a sexual disease, and you figure that should've scared me, and I should've stopped, but I didn't. I remember going to [city name] to the [clinic name] feeling like an absolute idiot. I shouldn't be here, I'm a professional man. But I got the pills and it was gone within a week and then the travel started to happen again and next thing you know, before you

know it, you have the internet movies at the hotel rooms. That would always be a prerequisite when I found a chat line. I would get on the chat line and try to pick up sexual partners. I remember years later, my wife caught me on the chat line because she saw my phone bill, and I was on the phone one day 121 times, I had called that chat line. As far as the essential addiction, where did it end up taking me – well gradually after I started getting away with behavior and I didn't get caught, that's when I kept drawing the line further and further out seeing how far you can go and where it will lead you, and it took me to some places where I thought I would never go. It got to the point where it was consuming my life. I would get up in the morning – “ How am I gonna feed this addiction today?” And it normally would start with checking the chat line to see who had messaged me the day before. I was always looking for a woman that was going to satisfy me physically, mentally, and emotionally. If I couldn't hook up with that woman or just something didn't materialize then I always would then go to the internet next because your one click away from image after image after image, and there'd be days where I'd be immersed on the internet for probably 10 to 12 to 14 hours at a stretch trying to balance work and this. And if I didn't have to the computer if I was in public places, I would go to hotel rooms where I would then call numerous escorts. Sometimes I'd call 1, 2, 3 escorts a day. Just spending money, and a lot of times what would happen is the escort wouldn't get there, or she would get there and I wasn't physically attracted to her but I went ahead with the act anyways, and then I'd call again hoping that somebody better would come that I'd be physically attracted to. I had affairs at work. I remember one time I could have lost my job because a secretary was going to file sexual harassment against me, but in reality, it was all consensual, and she just happened to tell her manager

who told my boss, but the beauty of it is my boss was involved with a lot of this with me, so he knew, and he had known the story prior, he just didn't want to hear it. I didn't lose my job, but I could've. I had affairs in the [city name] office with a secretary that was there, and everyone knew something was going on but no one ever said anything because I was the boss. It did end up where I did have an affair where I finally thought that I had met the woman of my dreams. She was in another city, and I would always plan my travel to make sure I could see her, and it got to the point where I thought she was the one for me, and I was willing to leave my wife and kids, willing to leave them.

I: And you met her on the chat line?

S1: Yeah, yeah. And she was the fantasy woman that I always thought – She was rich. She was beautiful, and she was into me. And when I was with her, it was like the rest of the world didn't exist. I finally had achieved this whatever I was searching for. And I remember I finally said screw it, I don't care anymore, and I told my wife about this and that's when she kicked me out of the house, and that's when reality hit me, when I was out of the house. I felt like a failure. Because I was missing my kids, and I was thinking, how could you do this? So I did end up breaking it off with her. That was very difficult because I didn't know what direction I wanted to go. I ended up with three sexual diseases during this time. Hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on escorts and travel, and I would get the money by embezzling from my company just to support the habit because once I got caught in that lifestyle, I couldn't stop that lifestyle – strip clubs, massage parlors – there's a lot of Chinese massage parlors everywhere; you can go in, and for not a lot of money, you can have your needs met. [Laughs.] You know, if you want to call it that. It got to the point where it was a consuming fire that was never

quenched, never quenched. Thinking back on it now, it's just incredible the things I did and what it lead me to do and how it was so consuming and yet so real. You can't really describe it. Now when you look back on it in retrospect, you think, my goodness, how sick were you to do this? But when you're in the middle of it, it doesn't matter and the only thing that matters is how can I get my next hit or how can I feed myself? It's always, "The next one is going to save me." The next big thing is going to finally be what you need to be fulfilled. And that cycle just happened over and over and over again.

I: You had talked about your wife and that the intimacy was not what you thought it was going to be. Can you elaborate on that? What did you think it was going to be or what were you expecting?

S1: Well, when you're in the fantasy world and you're viewing some of these images and watching some of these movies, the sex that you envision is the acts and things that are taking place that you think are normal and common place. Because it looks so great on tv and it looks so real. Then when you meet someone in real life and it doesn't happen that way, it's a big let down and a turn off. And plus, you know in these movies or in the fantasy, the woman will have sex at the drop of a hat. Well then when you're married, she could be sick. She could be that time of the month. She could be nursing a baby or a child. Doing all kinds of things, so all of a sudden this fantasy and this image and the projection that you think is rightfully yours that you're going to get from your spouse doesn't materialize. Not that the physical intimacy wasn't great and not that my wife wasn't beautiful, because she is. But it just wasn't the ideal, what you expect, you know, dirty, whatever you want, just no holds barred.

I: So then whenever you set into your reality that this is the physical connection, this is reality. What happened inside you that you started going online? Was it because you thought something was missing?

S1: Yeah. I had gotten at an early age. I didn't think I was ready to get married. You know, and I had asked God to send me a wife, and I didn't think she was the one because we didn't share the same evangelical faith, plus we had to get married.

I: You had to get married?

S1: Yeah. Well, we didn't have to, but she was pregnant.

I: Okay, so you married her because she was pregnant?

S1: Yes. So, I thought I was robbed. I didn't think she was really going to be who I thought I would be with because we were different. We talked about this. Had we not gotten pregnant, the type we were, we probably never would've gotten married. So then I started to get angry. You know, I had prayed for a wife from God, and I started to get angry because she wasn't the ideal or what I thought I needed or should I say, that I wanted.

I: So, would it be safe to say that you felt coerced into a marriage because of the circumstances?

S1: Not coerced because I force myself on her. She was a virgin, and actually, after we had sex, she cried. So, I sort of felt bad. But also with my faith, there's no way I can have an abortion, and I couldn't see a child of mine being raised without a father. So, no, I wasn't coerced, but it just happened real fast, and I was at the height of my sexual awareness and wanting to really experiment out there with what I didn't really have. Even though I had it in fantasies, I didn't really have it in real life.

I: Can you talk a little bit about when you got born again? How old were you?

S1: Seventeen.

I: And what happened that you decided to get into the evangelical faith?

S1: My father had left my mother, and, I don't know if I said it earlier, but I idolized my father and always tried to please myself, well not please myself, please him – even though I always pleased myself, but that's a different story [Laughs]. And trying to please him and be what I could for him, and then when he up and left us, it was a huge void for me, and my mother actually, when he left, my mother blamed me for the divorce. Said that I was the cause because when I was born, my father loved me and not her anymore. Now I know she was just projecting her hurt on me, but at the time I was livid and angry. And I remember as a child going to a traditional school, getting CCD classes and all that because I was raised Catholic. We would pass a big barn, like the tobacco barns where there'd always be signs on it. And it says on it, "You must be born again." And I passed that every single day. I have no idea what the heck that meant. So one day, in my junior year in high school, I'm on a basketball team, and we're in a bus. This one student, one of the basketball players who was the star – I knew something was different about him, but I didn't know what, and I heard him talking to a girl behind us and said, "Well, you have to be born again." And as soon as I heard that, I was like, bingo! What does that mean? So, I turned around, and I talked to him and then I went to church with him, and I accepted the Lord that night. And it fulfilled that emptiness of my father's wound and my mother's rejection of me.

I: Being born again?

S1: Yes. Absolutely. Because I needed something, and hey, this is it. Because I had sort of left the traditional faith because it was empty and I wasn't getting anything from it.

I: You had talked about feeling guilty a lot because of the masturbation even before you got saved, before you were born again. Was this because of your tradition Christian faith?

S1: Yes. Yeah, I just knew it just didn't feel right. I mean, even though it felt good to do it, I started living inside my head, but I didn't feel guilty enough to stop or it wasn't a consuming guilt at the time.

I: Did any feeling of guilt change after you were born again?

S1: I think for a while when I was born again, probably, the behavior stopped. I can't remember. That was close to thirty years ago. But I remember the overwhelming feeling of peace and joy, and I probably didn't really focus that much on it. At the initial stage, I was more interested in learning about God, that I had known from books but I really didn't know Him. It was more of an excitement time too. And I don't think I was consumed nearly as much with it as I would be later. I do remember feeling guilty when I went to college because I couldn't stop, and I knew it was wrong, so it probably was a progression. When I first became saved, it was a non-issue because I was so wanting to learn about God and seeking to find out who He is, but then, the more I found out about God and then the more I kept bringing this behavior with me then it started to convict me.

I: Your sexual behavior.

S1: Yes.

I: And whenever you got into college, you started to feel guilty again or it became problematic?

S1: Yes.

I: Can you talk about that?

S1: I remember one time, this is embarrassing – we had bunk beds, and one of the older football players came into my room and he smells my blankets and says, “This smells like...”, you know. And it was.

I: Sex?

S1: Well, moldy ejaculation. He used the word “cum” actually. And it was! And that was embarrassing, really embarrassing because that’s what I was doing, and when you’re in college, you don’t wash your sheets or anything like that. You just take it home to mom. And so, for about a month, I took, what was call salt peter, which, apparently they used to give to horses to keep them not – I heard about that, so I would actually mix this salt peter in a drink to see if I could stop my urge.

I: So it was given to horses to stop them from ejaculating?

S1: Yeah, to take away their mood or whatever. So I decided I should take that.

I: How did that go?

S1: It didn’t work and it got me sick, but I tried it. Because, at that point, I wanted to try anything to stop.

I: Did you want to stop because you were embarrassed or because you felt guilty?

S1: Both. I think the embarrassment really put me over the edge.

I: Can you elaborate on that? What do you mean by put you over the edge?

S1: I felt exposed, and I felt called out even though I didn’t admit to doing anything.

Yeah, someone finally knew that I was into something.

I: Did that make it real for you in some way?

S1: Well, yeah. It was hard to deny at that point. That's when I said, okay, well maybe this is a sign from God that you got to stop. You know, which is why, I thought you can take this and that'll help you stop.

I: Where you having sex in college?

S1: Yes, I had just started. That was only one time with a girlfriend, and we had planned it, but then that fell away. Shortly after that, we broke up. And so, I was always at that point then after that, I was always looking for that Christian woman that would be the one. That I wouldn't have to worry about all these urges and things like that.

I: And then you met your wife, and she got pregnant, and you got married?

S1: Yes. Yeah, I met her in the summer in between semesters.

I: Can you talk about when you started to get into recovery, when you decided to get help?

S1: I had tried to get help three or four times with counseling because there was a problem with our marriage. And we would go to counselors, and I would never divulge my behavior. It was always my wife's fault. I was always going to try to get her to act the way she should act. And these were secular counselors, and each time we would go, okay we're going to work on this, we're going to do this and we're going to get better, which I did.

I: How did you get better?

S1: I didn't get better, I just went along with the program, telling them what things I would do.

I: So you kind of behaved the way they wanted you to behave for a little while?

S1: Yes and make sure that I didn't get caught.

I: I see, so would you do things like communicate more and do more things around the house?

S1: Yes, exactly. I'd clean the kitchen and show that I was trying to make some sort of effort, but I never addressed the core problem, which was the sexual addiction. She had no clue. And then the one time, which she did catch me on the chat line, she brought that up with the counselor, and the counselor looks at me and says, "What kind of idiot are you?" That was his exact words – "What kind of idiot are you.?" That was hard because he just hit me right with it and he says, "Why do you do that?" And I said, "I don't know." Then again, I never divulged. I said, "Oh, I was just having fun on the line." Never divulged, well that line was leading me to meet other people and I was doing this. And he called me out, and I hated **when he called me an idiot and he challenged me about why I would do that. I was exposed.**

I: Because your secret was out? Is that why you felt exposed?

S1: Yes. He didn't offer me any help. Just basically said, "Stop." Basically said stop. So I had tried at least some help because the marriage was rocky, but my wife always said, "We're going to get a divorce once the kids are grown." She's only going to stay married because of the kids.

I: Was it rocky because of the sexual connection you mentioned? What made it rocky?

S1: It made it rocky because my day consisted of trying to consume my needs with sex, so I had nothing left for her or for the kids.

I: So, were you tired all the time?

S1: Tired, irritable, miserable, and also trying to hide everything. So my life would consist of acting out and hiding that you did act out, then feeling guilty for acting out,

begging and pleading God to ask him to take it from me. That's what my cycle was. So, ultimately now, when I look back at it, I was a horrible father. I was a horrible husband. I can't believe that she stayed with me all this time because all it was about, in addiction, is me, me, me. Satisfying me. My wants, my needs, my desires. Taking and deserving anything I can to fill that big void and hole inside of me. So recovery never worked that way. I remember my father was on his death bed with congestive heart failure and he was, like I said, my idol, but I was still never good enough. So we would take him to hospital after hospital for about six months trying to prolong his life not believing that he was actually going to die. He was only 69 years old. Very young, and just still vibrant, still working. And I would remember the wound as I'd sit there with my dad, and we'd talk. We'd talk about stuff; the stuff would be the [baseball team], the [football team], my kids, my business and all that, but I never heard from my dad what I wanted to hear – "You're a good son. You're significant. You mean something. I love you." I never heard that. I never heard that from him, and then he died. So consequently, at that point, I didn't care anymore. I was so distraught, and I just engaged in unprotected sex at that point, dangerous activities with prostitutes, even a line I didn't think I would cross I started to cross again, and then, on the chat line, was really the thing that put me over the edge because I was on a chat line trying to seek that woman, and I got caught, and it was my brother-in-law who caught me. When I heard his voice, he said, "What are you doing on this line? First of all, he shouldn't have even known that I was on that line, and secondly, how did he find it? So as soon as I heard that, it was like a piercing through my heart because I thought, "Finally caught." I had been caught before, but I always lied. You know my wife found these sexual pills that would cure whatever I had, and I had went on

the internet real fast and found that it could be for something else, or I told her I got it in a bathroom or something like that.

I: What do you mean by “sexual pills”?

S1: The pills I was prescribed at the clinic could also be used for other purposes.

I: Oh, you mean, you were prescribed pills for an STD you had? She found those?

S1: Yes, and when I went online and I found out that you could contract them in the shower or something and the medicine is also used for other things, that’s what I

told her. She caught me on the chat line, obviously the other time, and I’d had the affair the one time, so those three times, I had been busted. But this time now, it’s real because it no longer is within just the confines of me and her. It’s in the family; now the family knows. Now everybody knows, and I’m going to get exposed because when it was just between me and her, I could maneuver her, I could lie, I can manipulate, and I can control her because she’s not leaving because of the kids. So, we can keep it in house, but once I’m caught, then all of a sudden, I’m exposed, and the whole rest of the world knows who I really am. This happened right after my father’s death, and a couple days prior to that, I was at church making a great speech about my dad and the importance of family. Again, playing the part of the great husband, the father, the Christian man, talking about the love and honor and respect of who my dad was and how he’s a great man, all that stuff. Lying on the altar of God. But again, it was great because people told me how great I was and painting this image of how I’m living the ultimate life. So that combined with about two or three weeks after that, my middle son looked me in the eye and said, “You know dad, you talk a good ball game, but you’re nothing but an ef – ing hypocrite.” So he called me out. He didn’t know that I was an addict, but he knew that there was

something wrong. So, he's exposing me, my brother-in-law's caught me. I couldn't recover from it because I had tried on my own to recover; for years, I would beg and plead with God to take this from me. He never did. I would bargain with God; if you take this behavior from me, I'll go to church more often, I'll read the Bible more, I'll be a better husband, just expecting Him to take it, and then I'll serve Him, once He takes it, and He didn't take it.

I: And by "it," do you mean the sexual urges and cravings?

S1: Yes. Yeah, and the behavior that I was doing that was just destroying me and just holding me in shame and guilt and contempt. And I tried that for years, so eventually, I just left my faith altogether because I figured A) God wasn't big enough to take this from me, because he wasn't doing it. B) He could care less about me, and C) I'm going to hell. So, if I'm going to hell and all this, then I might as well have fun and do what men do.

I: So, you thought you were going to hell because you couldn't control your behavior?

S1: Yes.

I: And therefore you were sinning against God?

S1: Yes. Absolutely.

I: So did you leave your faith because you thought you were going to go to hell anyway?

S1: Right, and He couldn't take it from me. He never listened and let me do stuff that I just couldn't believe that I could do. Never realizing that I was an addict. Because I didn't even know there was such a thing. I just knew that I was doing behaviors that I knew I shouldn't do. So my recovery effort finally got to the point where, I'll kill myself. For years, I had dreamed of my wife dying, that way if she dies, then I'm free to have all my

fantasies met without any guilt. It's sick now that I think about it. That's what I would dream of.

I: So the guilt you felt was only connected to your wife? If your wife wasn't there then the guilt wouldn't be there?

S1: Right.

I: Do you know why that was?

S1: Probably because I wouldn't be cheating on her. Because at that point I had lost the faith anyway. I knew what I was doing was wrong, but at least I wouldn't be – I mean, because I'd look at her everyday and hate myself. So, I was probably wanting her to die, but in reality I was wanted me dead because I would come home and look at her and who she is, knowing what I'm doing to her behind her back, and then I'd look at the mirror and hate myself. So the only way to get rid of that hate for myself was to get rid of her. So, I'd planned on killing myself by getting drunk and taking my car into a pole, and I almost pulled it off. At the last second, as I was heading for the pole, I just swerved and moved over to the side of the road and just wept and wept bitterly. My brother-in-law never told on me, never exposed me, but I knew I was going to get caught, and I knew I couldn't stop, so my life as I knew it then was over and the real me was going to be found out.

Probably three years prior to this incident, my brother-in-law's wife was dying from cancer. His wife was my wife's sister. Yeah, his wife was my wife's sister, they were sisters. She was dying of cancer, and he was having an affair, and while he was having an affair, so was I. Once she had died, the immediate family confronted him with the affair and wanted him to stop. They couldn't confront him while she was alive because they

wanted her death to be peaceful. They didn't want to burn her with that. And when they confronted him, he admitted to the affair and said that he wasn't going to stop. So then the family was so hurt that they basically kicked him out, and we never talked to him, including me. And this was the same man that three days earlier, I hugged him on her death bed, looked him in the eye and said, "Man, I don't know why this happened, but I'll be there for you." Three days later, I'm not there for him because, I can't be associated with this. What he did was utterly wrong, how could he do that? And, you know, isn't it ironic that three or four years later, he exposes me? And yet, he never did, so he was a better man than me, much better man than me. So, as I'm weeping there bitterly, just crying and having no idea where my life is going to go. I turned on the radio, and it went to a Christian station, which, I don't know, I probably hit the scan or something, maybe, [laughs], and I hear coming through the radio, "Do you suffer from masturbation? Do you struggle with lust? Do you struggle with pornography?" And I was like, bingo! I never heard that before! I knew I did, but I never heard of anyone actually saying that that exists. I just thought it was behavior that you did, that men do because I started hanging around with the professional men, the men that like to have fun, just don't get caught. You know, it's okay, just leave it out there, don't get involved, just do your thing; you need to have your needs met and come home and be the great husband. And as soon as I heard that, it resonated with me, it was like God was calling to me through the radio, and it was an advertisement for Every Man's Battle, and I called right then and there. I talked to the counselor, and I described, finally to somebody what I was doing. I had never ever *ever* divulged my behavior. I mean guys knew what I was doing, but those were guys I hung around with that did the same thing but not to the degree that

I did. You know, it's like an alcoholic. Some alcoholics take one drink and they're done, where someone else could have a couple of drinks, and there's no problem. And I called immediately, made arrangements to go to the four day seminar, went home that day and told my wife that I needed help, and that's when my recovery started.

I: And then you went to Every Man's Battle.

S1: Yeah, about three months later. Yeah, I vowed after I'd tell my wife. She asks, what have I done now. I couldn't tell her because if I had told her everything and divulged and come clean, it would have just, I'd be done. I'd be done, I'd be completely done, and I wouldn't even have a chance to see if I could get better. And so, yeah, so three months later is when I went.

I: Can you talk about your experience at Every Man's Battle?

S1: Yeah. The day before I went, I remember looking at my wife and telling her, "I'm going away, and if I get better, and you don't, I'm leaving you." And the reason I said that was because, as an addict, I was blaming everybody else. It was her fault that I had to go. It's amazing now, but that's what I said. The day I went, I was hoping that nobody would be there that I knew because, again, that I'd be exposed, and you know, "What are you doing here?" "Oh, I don't know." And, soon as I gotten there, I was looking around and, even though it was in my home town, there wasn't anybody there I knew. The very first night, the counselor got up and shared a story, and he was talking about him and what he did, and I thought, my goodness, that's me. Maybe a different behavior, but it was me, and that cleared the air a little bit. It got me some hope, and then the next day, we got into small groups and one by one, every man went around the table, and I find, we're all in the same boat. Some of them were there because their wives made them go

there, others were there because it was court mandated, but it was all the same sense of utter despair and loss of hope and this addiction just destroying lives and just ruining who you were. And so, I was able to connect with people, the same people that I wanted to avoid and didn't even want to know – **I just didn't want to be associated with that. I never wanted to be one of them. I just didn't want to be part of that. I didn't even know it existed, and I knew that I needed to be there, but I didn't really want to be there.** I was able to at least, connect with people, so again, I knew that there was something different about where I was, but it still wasn't really helping me because this was a Christian organization, and I had abandoned my Christian faith. About the third day into it, they always start the morning with worship and praise, and I would never do that.

I: And Every Man's Battle is an evangelical Christian association.

S1: Yes, absolutely. I didn't know it. I just knew I needed to be there. I just knew there was something I had to find. **I couldn't go on with how my life was. There had to be something out there that was different because I was in the insanity mode – doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.** The third day, as their worshipping, I'm starting to open up a little bit, but that's when God called me and really started my healing process. He said, "Why are you still crucifying me?" And I had no idea what the hell that meant in my mind. And then it became real to me; His death on the cross, He'd forgiven my sins and He wanted to take them upon Himself, but in my addiction, I never accepted that forgiveness because I always thought that I was going to hell. He'll never forgive me because I'm sinning. And I always thought I was different. In essence, what I was saying is, "Your death on the cross was okay, but it wasn't good

enough for me because I'm different." So I was saying, okay, I'm crucifying Him all over again, hey, it's a waste. And then I realized at that point, okay, the way that I was trying in recovery was, I was trying to be good. Just like I was with my dad, when I'm good, I'm accepted and loved, and so, I was trying to stop acting out. That would be why, everyday I would get down on my hands and knees and beg and cry to God, "Take this from me. I'll never do it again," figuring, okay then God's going to love me and I'll be fine. And then what would happen is then during the day, I would act out, and then the horrible guilt and shame. I always felt at that part that God turned His back on me, you know, and I have to say 50 Hail Marys and 125 Our Fathers and all that, and then maybe, maybe just have the chance of forgiveness, and, at that point, when God said, "Why are you still crucifying me?" I realized I had to surrender all. And I said, okay God, you want me? You got me. Here I am. I'm a liar. I'm a thief. I'm an adulterer. I'm selfish, you name it. Whatever I was was exposed because I finally started seeing that it wasn't about my mother or my wife or my father, it was about me trying to fill that hole and void, that lack of connection, that I had abandoned God. He never abandoned me; I abandoned Him. And I just gave up, and I wept, and I said, here I am. Take me from here and, I asked for forgiveness and I forgave myself, and I've forgiven myself ever since.

I: You said that you were an evangelical Christian since you were 17

S1: Yeah.

I: And you still had the same sexual struggles throughout.

S1: Yeah.

I: What shifted from when you were an evangelical Christian in the beginning and struggling with your sexual behaviors to where you are now, coming back to your evangelical faith and still struggling with those sexual behaviors?

S1: Well, at the beginning, I never exposed these behaviors. It was just like living in the closet. It was just something that I had to deal with that I never brought to God or never brought to anybody. It was just a habit or something that, you know, it's not that big of a deal because I'm not hurting anybody. You know, it's okay, nobody's hurting. I'm just doing this in private. I'm just doing this in secret. You know, and for six, seven, eight years, I really wasn't hurting anybody per se because I wasn't acting out physically with anybody. I was surfing the internet, but it wasn't affecting anyone, or so I thought. So, obviously I know that [laughs]. It ended up destroying me. It got to the point that it was bigger than God because the hole that it took to compartmentalize, the compartment that I gave it became my entire being. Now, the difference is complete and utter surrender, realizing that those behaviors are because of my flesh and my sinful nature, and now I realize in order for me to not go back to that, I need God in every moment of my life and in everything that I do because I had been so used to running and hiding and numbing myself from pain. Now when I have pain, I got to go to God. When I have anxiety or fear or anger or bitterness or resentment, my old way, even in the evangelical times, was just to numb myself, thinking, "Okay, it's okay, I'm a little numb, but I'm going to go on." Now I can't numb myself because I know where that takes you, so the only choice I have is to surrender. To surrender to God and ask Him to expose why am I feeling this way? What have I done and then, all of a sudden, starting to ask for forgiveness, starting to repent on the spot, asking others to forgive me, making amends to people that I have to,

and I've made many amends and it's a continual process. All the people that I've harmed and wronged, I need to make right, and that's a continual process in the recovery that I do now that I never did before.

I: So is some of the difference the exposure? Now you are exposed and before you weren't?

S1: Well yeah. I know who I am now. I'm a Christian that has a thorn in the flesh that happens to be a sexual addiction, and I can't let that fester. So, I know that in my own strength and in my own flesh, I am powerless over this, and it's been exposed and it's been brought to the light.

I: Okay, yeah, because you mentioned a few times in this interview about the fear of exposure.

S1: Yeah, and that's how society is with this. It's somewhat acceptable to be an alcoholic. At least people know that in society and that their trying to get help, but to be a sex addict, it's like, you're a child molester, you're a pervert, you expose yourself, you're sick! I mean, this addiction does lead people into that, but for the majority of it, it doesn't do that. But how can you associate with those kind of people, you know? Or, the other extreme is you just do that behavior because that's what men do, you know, but it's a secret society. Don't talk and don't tell the wife, it's like an unknown bond.

I: Can you think of a time when your religion had a harmful impact on your sexuality?

S1: Well, the guilt and the shame and feeling God, given His standards, that if you look at a woman with lust in your heart, you've committed adultery. When you take God's word as it is, and you realize you can't do that. You can't live those standards that He wants. I would say the harmful part of it is like, screw it, I can't do this. How could I possibly

ever live out what He's saying? And the more you think it, unless you understand His grace and reality, unless you understand that he is going to forgive you because you are going to fall. If you don't know that element, and you take a look at it at just face value, you're done.

I: So that high expectation is what you interpreted it as?

S1: Yes. Right.

I: You talked a little bit about your relationship with your parents. With your relationship with your wife, you said you were not there for your wife and children because you were tired all the time.

S1: Yes, I was miserable around them, but only miserable behind closed doors. In public, I was great.

I: Before you started getting more miserable because of your involvement with your sexual behavior, were there any other problematic issues in your marriage outside of your thinking that she was not the right one for you to marry?

S1: I was Type A, aggressive, go getter, life of the party, and she was reserved, quiet, shy. She hated that about me. I hated the part where she would try to keep me from being the life of the party. It was very, very difficult.

I: So your personalities were very different?

S1: Yeah.

I: How long did you know each other before you got married?

S1: About a month.

I: Oh, so you were both still getting to know each other in the marriage?

S1: Right. And bringing an addiction into it just, we had no chance. Yeah, and then you have a kid, you know.

I: Did your sexual acting out get worse as your marriage got worse?

S1: Yes. Absolutely.

I: So would you say that the sexual acting out was a coping mechanism for you which escalated?

S1: Yes. A typical day would be that I would get up in the morning and check the chat line to see who had messaged me, so see if there's this answer on the other side of the line that's going to fulfill me, finally, that I finally will find the answer and the significance where someone can tell me, "You're wonderful." Then I'd go to work and do some work, surf the internet, do more work, surf the internet, do more work, get on the chat line, always closing my door.

I: And you would surf the internet for pornography?

S1: Yes. And that's a continuation, and then, if I felt up to it, go get a massage depending on how my finances were. I was traveling at the time, and I would plan my travel according to whatever city I could go where I knew somebody, and then before I'd go there, I'd surf the internet for escort services and try to line it up by the time I got there. So I would plan my work schedule around my addiction. Now that I think about it, I have no idea how I raised a family, how I was in a career and an addiction all at the same time. The end of my typical day would end up at nine, coming home about eight, whenever I come home and just zonking out on the couch because I was so exhausted from not getting caught or doing what I needed to do and not being there for my kids and then just

tuning out on tv, just escaping the entire world and then not being able to sleep at all because of fear and worry about everything else.

I: About?

S1: Finances, finances, everything.

I: Like daily stresses?

S1: Yeah, because at night when you're there in your thoughts, you can fantasize a while, you can please yourself and then the thoughts are right back there. And so that was a typical day for years, and it was just miserable, absolutely miserable.

I: How long have you been an evangelical Christian?

S1: I was an evangelical Christian at 17 but backslid from 20-42.

I: And so, from 42 to 47, you were back to your religion?

S1: Yes.

I: Can you discuss what backsliding means for you?

S1: Yeah, I knew the truth, and I just couldn't live it. I tried many times repenting, even popping into churches and getting re-saved. Many times. But then, never stuck to it and because I was never willing to address what I was or who I was and what I was doing.

I: So with backsliding, you aren't just saved once and then you're saved forever? You backslide into old behaviors or sins and have to get re-saved?

S1: Yeah, that's what I thought at the time. I was a relatively new Christian when all this started and I didn't understand the entirety of grace and sin and repentance and things like that. Obviously, I do now.

I: So, that's changed for you?

S1: Yeah, I'm saved.

I: Do you believe now that you'll always be saved?

S1: Yes. I do go back into behaviors because there's still sin. I mean, there are occasions that I'm still angry or greedy. The standards that Jesus sets for you on the Sermon on the Mount are impossible to live. However, I realize that by the Holy Spirit, I'm just striving now to get closer to that. You know, I'm being refined, I'm being pruned, I'm like the branch, pruning and cutting off and things like that. I no longer equate the addiction as the only thing wrong. I equate the addiction as the symptom of sin. And do I still sin? Yes, but the difference is now what I do; I ask for repentance right away, and then ask God to search my heart and tell me why I sinned and try to get better the next time, almost like *Groundhog Day*. Because when you find you have degrees of anger, He'll keep showing you anger until you finally get through the one, and then it's like peeling an onion. So yeah, I believe I'm saved. Do I believe that I lapse back into where I was? Absolutely, but I pattern my day with discipline and focus on Him in order so I don't have to go back there. Others believe, maybe, when they start acting out, they have this horrible guilt and shame and all that, and it just kills it for them again because it takes them days to try to get out of that guilt and shame.

I: It sounds like that was something that you used to struggle with.

S1: Absolutely. But I also can tell you that I have not acted out since I started the real recovery where other guys in this still do act out.

I: And so is what you are seeing when other guys act out that they are going through that same cyclical pattern that you went through in your active addiction?

S1: Yes, right. But I try to say, hey, there's been some behavior that I've done where I wish I would have acted out instead of saying some of the harmful things, and I'm

exposed. I've said or done, some of the anger that I exhibited towards my son or towards my daughter. The difference now is when I'm exposed, I'm exposed, and I see it, and say, oh man, I can't believe I still did that, where as before when I exposed myself, I would just comfort myself.

I: What do you mean when you would expose yourself?

S1: When I'm angry with somebody. If I used to be angry, I'd yell and scream; they deserved it because they did that too me. Now when I'm angry, I go to see, where did that come from? So I'm exposed, and I exposed the anger inside of me, and that's only because of the grace I live in now and the Holy Spirit revealing those things to me, bringing the darkness to the light. Because I'm asking Him to do that because I have to because I'm an addict. See, this might sound crazy, but if I could wipe away the hurt and the pain and the 25 years that I wasted of my life, I would love to do that, but I'm also thankful for where I'm at now by going through that because God has brought me so much closer to Him, leaning on Him and surrendering to Him more than ever because I have to, I don't have a choice. I'm no longer skating through life, I got to depend on Him because, let's face it, there's sex in the world everywhere. I mean, you just look at a woman and boom! You're one click away to whatever you want on that internet, and so that's so much of the way you have to rely on His strength and power because, on your own, you're nothing, and you don't got it. I remember, like the fifth day of Every Man's Battle, I went to my counselor. I had heard at Every Man's Battle a guy's testimony and how he'd been sober for years, and I remember going to him like, "Can I really be sober?" He said, "Yeah! Just today." I'll never forget that.

Did you want to get into the recovery and how things are with my wife now?

I: Yes, I would like to.

S1: Yeah, because we didn't do that, and that's probably huge. The day before that I left my wife to go to Every Man's Battle, I looked at her and said, "If you don't change, and I do, I'm leaving you." I remember coming back four days later, taking the luggage up to the room, and I remember her arms crossed, staring at me – "Well?" And I looked her in the eye and said, "I can't believe what I've done to you. I am so sorry for the man that I have been. If you choose to leave me, I don't blame you, but from this point on, all I'm going to do is try to love you and become the man of God that you deserve." And she basically said, "Yeah, well, we'll see." I've heard that over and over again. And in recovery, I am learning how to truly love her, that I can't love her, it's only through the Holy Spirit and Jesus that I can actually love somebody, and there's been many times where I've tried to push my views on her again, like, "Hey! I'm sober. Forgive me. Get over it. Let it go. Drop it." And I've pushed her to the brink where many times she says, "I can't take it anymore." Because I would say, "Read this book. Come to church here," because we still don't share the same faith – "Do this, you'll be better," so I was trying to push her recovery on her, and she's not ready. And I remember one time when I had pushed her so far that she said, "That's it. I'm done," and I cried out to God and I said, "This doesn't make sense! I could understand this years ago, but not now. I'm sober and I'm better." And He said, "Leave her to me. I will heal her and put her on a path when she is ready. Your responsibility is just to love her." And that's what I'm trying to do. Now, do I make mistakes? Sure. Does she still get triggered and angry? Absolutely. Is she ever going to forgive me one hundred percent? Probably not. Many men in this program don't have that chance. Their wives, as soon as they find out something, they're

gone or they want to know and nitpick every single thing, where he is, and it just drives them apart. But I've been blessed. I mean, our kids are older. Our daughter is actually a senior this year and will be leaving the house for college, and there's been no talk of our marriage disintegrating at this point. She knows I'm different. She's seen the change. She's wondering, is the old me ever coming back? So she's still guarded. She still has her walls, and she still protects herself because she doesn't want to get hurt again. And a lot of times people ask me questions too, "Well, you're a sex addict. How can you have sex?" I get asked that question all the time. The difference now is when your intimate with your wife, it's the way God intended it to be, between a man and a woman, and there's nobody in between. There's no fantasies, it's not an act, and I have the intimacy now that I was missing and trying to find all those years in all those fantasies. There's no comparison, and we have a long way to go; we've come a long way. The restoration and the healing of the kids and the family has been incredible. But I'm a living testimony of this; you'll find a lot of guys can't share that because it just hasn't happened for them. I've heard that an addict such as me – one in sixteen percent stay sober, and probably when they first start the same day to stay sober forever it just doesn't happen. Hey [laughs], you know, I wasted 30 years of my life or 35 years of my life. I got a lot of making up to do.

I: Have you ever attended Promise Keepers?

S1: I haven't ever attended Promise Keepers, but I know men that do. I'm in accountability groups; we're doing studies on relationships with our wives. I'm heavily involved in my church and with men's groups and things like that.

I: Is there an expectation for you to be the head of the house in your marriage? Is that something that is significant in your marriage?

S1: Yeah, were as before, I used to leave the decisions and the religion and all that up to her because I sort of stayed in the background and did my own thing, but I'm re-establishing the Godly role that I should play. It's still hard because, you know, she was so independent doing things on her own – to allow her to let some of that down, but I'm establishing it.

I: She is supportive of that?

S1: Sometimes.

I: Has it been difficult for her to give up some of the roles that she was in charge of before?

S1: Yeah, and I know she wants me to, but, also, can she trust me because in the addiction I would fly off the handle and say some mean and hurtful things to the kids and treat them in ways that my dad used to treat me. It's a lot of wounds but now they're all being restored and turned around.

I: So is one of the struggles with your role in raising the children because of her trust issues with you?

S1: Right, yeah.

I: Would you say that you and your wife are equals with leadership in the family or is there a hierarchy? How is your role now?

S1: When it comes to financial and business and the decisions, I've always been at the top. You know, she's never worked; she does the homemaking things. But when it used to come to the children, that was her domain. That was it. I would be the disciplinarian,

but communication with the kids was always her. But now it's more of an equal – she gets me involved a lot more. I'm a lot more involved in the process with the kids, and she also relies on me a lot more to do the role that I always should've done that she's tired of doing.

I: What was she tired of doing?

S1: The father role.

I: She was taking on the father role and now you are taking on that role more?

S1: Yeah, before it was just basically avoidance of the kids, avoidance of responsibility. I would just provide money and do my own thing, so she had to – I was always the disciplinarian and I still was the father but not the nurturing communicative person. That was her. She was nurturing and communicative, and I was distant and cold. The only part of their lives that I would be a part of was when it would come to activities.

I: So you feel like you are equal partners?

S1: Yeah.

I: What have been your experiences or views around homosexuality in general and in the sexual addiction realm.

S1: Well, my initial thought of homosexuality was God's going to spit them out of His mouth. You know, because that's in His word somewhere at one point. They're sick and I hate them. How could they be like that ...that's what I thought. Now I realize that it's just another aspect where this disease could lead you to, and there are many men that I'm in groups with that, at the end, you hold hands and you say your thing and ... they've been attracted to men or have acted out with men at one point ... now I view them as ... they're

just like me. They need help. They need help and when I hear the world say, “Well, he was born that way. He can’t help it.” I’m thinking, that’s such a lie from the pit of hell because I know men that are recovering from it. And I just see it, it’s just ... their behavior just manifests itself into another behavior. I mean, there are men in jail for this behavior because it led them to children. You know, it never led me to those degrees, but, who knows, it could have spiraled to anywhere. If you would have told me at age 12, “You’re going to start to masturbate, and you’re going to end up here.” I would’ve said, “You’re nuts.” So, the homosexuality is uh ... it’s the same thing; the men are just trying to fill that void in their heart and they find this where they think they’re told they’re significant and they mean something in the arms of another man.

I: So with homosexuality, you see it as something that needs to be repaired? No one is just born that way?

S1: At least in my eyes and in the circles that I run around with. Like, there are some meetings I go to where we can’t wear shorts just so we don’t let the men ... a man there that may have same sex attraction ... turn them on. You know, and, some guys, you can’t really hug them because they’ll get to ... it’ll be a trigger for them. Something like that, but I respect that. I understand that they have a need for the same thing that I do and that God can fill that void, where as before, even as an evangelical, I couldn’t believe they could do stuff like that because that’s so against nature and that’s such a sin. You know, there were degrees of sin, and that was egregious.

S2 Edited Synthesis

I: Can you discuss the nature of your sexual addiction?

S2: To start back in my teenage years, I was very active sexually. I've since in my journey and healing, I've learned a lot about that, and ... as far as why, but I would...um, I had multiple partners as a teenager in relationships, sometimes long-term, sometimes short-term as far as the ones who were sexual in nature, and ultimately, I went to college and still was promiscuous and sexually engaged in multiple places. Then I met the one who became my wife. We had a relationship that was physical, and ultimately, she became pregnant and we got married. It was tough, you know, I left college and went into the military, and it was tough going. There was a lot of different emotional baggage then went along for both of us, everything from family dynamics to our own entrapments to her growing up in an alcoholic household, things like that. But she grew up in the church, or in a church, and I grew up Catholic. I grew up in a very spiritual environment; it seems strange. I grew up in a very spiritual environment, my mom was always open for me to go and do whatever in the Christian world, but my wife grew up in a very structured non-denominational, Bible-oriented, disciplined ... I don't know how to describe it.

I: Was it an evangelical church?

S2: They would describe themselves as evangelical, and although we are still of the same denomination today, but it's nondenominational, and we are definitely evangelical whereas her mom's church is very rigid. I don't know how to describe it other than that. We consider ourselves more contemporary although very strongly Bible based, and her family will say they're Bible based, but you get into some hard things within the Bible. So my wife went from being a um ... not that she was that promiscuous, but she had built

a relationship with me and, I guess marriage and having a child was a turning point for her. **My wife was battling and struggling with her own issues and her own stuff – wanting to be righteous and pure and having her own struggles as far as growing up. She grew up in a very conservative Christian atmosphere, and she was very engaged in the church. She wanted not be promiscuous and do what was right, and it was a struggle. When we got married, she was able to turn the corner very rapidly and step back into grace and step back into the light and find her comfort there.**

I: She got pregnant before you got married.

S2: Before we got married, yeah.

I: Is that why you got married?

S2: Yes, that's why we got married, yes. I mean we both, we loved each other and it wasn't anything forced or anything like that.

I: How long did you know each other before you got married?

S2: About eight months. We had met the second semester of our freshman year, and we got married in December of that same year. So, anyway, like I said, I went into the military, there were different arguments and different things. Life was tough, life was great, it was up and down all the time with us, but in my life, in my self, in my own persona, there was always a struggle. I can't say it was lust, I don't know. For me, the addiction is not as much about imagery as it is about relationship, and when I struggle with my wife, as far as we would argue and have these fights and be really disconnected, I would tend to have lustful ideas and thoughts, and my mind would go places that I didn't want it to go, but ultimately, early on in our marriage it led to a relationship outside of my marriage that was inappropriate and physical and wrong, and I really

struggled with that, and about the same time, believe it or not, I was coming to have a better understanding of the need to have Jesus in my life. Ultimately, I became baptized in the church, and that was prior to the event happening in our marriage for me.

I: The event is?

S2: The sexual affair. And um, right now it's hard for me to put together all the time lines, but ... you know, I was ... I came into the church, I was baptized, I was really starting to come into the faith from that standpoint but yet I had this great struggle going on in my life too – in particular, around my marriage and then having allowed this affair to happen.

I: So you got saved after you were married?

S2: Yes.

I: How old were you?

S2: About 20, 21 ... I would have been 21, 22. Yeah, I turned 21 in basic training, I got married, 6 months – went to basic training and turned 21 when I was in basic training.

I: You were married at how old?

S2: 19 or 20, my daughter was born at 20. She was about 6 month old.

I: So neither you or your wife were born again prior to the ...

S2: No, I would consider myself, like I said, born-again at that point where I realized that I needed Jesus and it was only through Jesus that I could have salvation and find eternity, and, like I said, I was baptized into His church, and I was probably about 20. The affair probably happened a couple of years after that.

I: Okay. How did you get affiliated with this church?

S2: My wife grew up in a church, it's called the Church of Christ, in her home town , and at this point we were in the air force. We were in [city name], and she had gone to many churches in the area, and I had just figured out that Sundays always went a whole lot better when I went to church with her. And so I would go to church with her to keep being somewhat happy. And then I read a book by Fred Peretti, and I don't know where I got those books, but I loved those books. I started seeing the spiritual realm, and I always had an understanding and a prayer life with God and some understanding of the spiritual realm. I knew that there was more to life than what I could see. Through those works with fiction, I started asking myself, what kind of life and what kind of pressures did I put on my wife and my child. Through that, I started studying more, and came to the conviction that I needed Jesus.

I: Can you tell me when your sexual addiction started or when you felt there was a problem?

S2: As I look back now, I know my sexual addiction started whenever I was very young as a teenager. The sexual relationships were part of me identifying in my manhood, but that's what I know now. When I look back ... my mother is on her third marriage. My father and my dad are not the same men. I didn't learn that until I was in the fifth grade that my dad wasn't necessarily my father, and that really impacted me.

I: So who you identified as your biological father was your step-father?

S2: Correct. He adopted me. From a legal standpoint, I am his son, but ultimately, my biological father had left. I have a relationship with him now, but, at that time, it was just a huge hole in my heart that I didn't know about, really. It's there. You have anger, you have this that and the other, but there's ...and then in my senior year of high school, my

mom and dad divorced and he separated, and it became that much harder. I was older. I was busy. He was busy. He would make time for the younger siblings, but, you know. **I was away in college and doing my thing, and there was a greater expectation to need to make time for the younger siblings. It wasn't as much of an expectation for me, and neither one of us made the time for each other for a couple of years.** So, I look back now, and I know that as I moved from woman to woman or conquest to conquest, that helped me identify as a man for just mere seconds, you know. It did that for me.

I: Can you talk about your behaviors in sexual addiction, maybe how you progressed through high school and college into your marriage and then into your affairs.

S2: Um, it's difficult... I know masturbation was always something that was a part of life for me. It's one of those things that you always feel bad about, but then also, society says – well, you know, 95% of the children do it and the other 5% are lying, right? or whatever. So as a culture, we basically say everybody is doing it, but ultimately you know that **it's a mixed message. In your heart, you know that it's wrong. Within yourself you say it's wrong, but in my lifetime you have Dr. Ruth and others saying, "It's perfectly healthy."** So there's a mixed message. It's also a private thing and it's quiet, so people don't discuss it. **The truth of the matter is that it is wrong and there are reasons why it's wrong, why it impacts us physically, emotionally, and spiritually, and there's not a lot of material out there about that – how it impacts us, and how it impacts our thought life, our walk with God, our ability to really reach him in prayer and meditation.** I can remember knowing that I had, as I look back now, relationships, I think we had like eight cheerleaders on the squad, and I was captain of the football team, and I knew that I had slept with x percent of the cheerleaders, and that

made me feel good. For whatever reason. Now, it's so sad, but yet that helped me identify ... it was part of my identity, I guess. You know, the locker room talk. It's not that I would ever *talk* about it, it just, deep down inside, yeah, you're a man ... because my father wasn't there to do that for me, if you will, alright. So there was always some thought in the back of my mind, when I get married, that's it. You know, yeah, I'm going to party. I'm going to be a little bit wild. You know, I'm going to be the American icon of jock and good student and this that and the other ... the good son, up to a point. But when I get married, that's going to be it. **In my heart, I'm kind of rubble-rousing right now as a single person, and I thought I would grow up and be single forever. I was someone that thought a promise is a promise, and you keep your promise, and marriage, to me, was a promise and a commitment and serious business. It should have been a turning point for me as it should be for many others. I don't know if someone is expecting for the sky to open and the songs to start playing and the light to shine down and for you to be instantly cured from all of your baggage and issues, but it doesn't happen in marriage, in particularly for a guy. I can remember my wife, she was able to turn around, and I remember there being some kind of resentment in that for me. It was like, "God, what don't you do those things in me, make me more viable in this marriage life?"**

I: So you thought that once you got married that you would not want to be promiscuous anymore?

S2: Correct. And then I got married and because, like I said, my girlfriend got pregnant. Although we loved each other, we wanted to do the right thing. **The right thing was for her not to have an abortion and for us to have the child. That was never ever a**

consideration, and of course, there was a choice as to whether you get married or not. You can still be a father and not necessarily be married, but that was never anything that we wanted. We wanted to do right as best as we could. At that time I was not practicing my faith at that time, but I was still a believer. I can't say that it was as much about my faith as it was about me, but ultimately, I think there was some resentment there. I know there was some resentment there, especially on my part. So, I've never been one to be a gawker. It's not so much about the imagery, but it's about relationship, and it's about always being the fun guy, and the guy that could take care of anything, and the right guy to go in chaos, and that type of thing that all comes back to an addictive personality if you will. So, yes, masturbation was something that was part of life, and, of course, the relationship that my wife and I ultimately had ... when things were good between her and I, I think things were good, and I would feel good about myself. So there's a definite sense of, when I look back now, codependency that was there that I still have to struggle with today. Ultimately, it still came back to sex and my identity and it led me to an affair there, and I hit my knees. I prayed to God ultimately, I don't want this, I don't want this lifestyle. Take it away to me. I'm taking it to my grave. There's no way I'm telling my wife, but, you know, take this from me. And for many, many years, I was okay. Then men started to coming to me because I was very active in the church ... this was later on, okay, so let's go ... this is years past the affair in which, you know, and it wasn't just that affair. There was always, always a sense of, am I going to stay married, am I available, whatever, not really being surrendered to my marriage. Not necessarily being actively promiscuous but unsure. But anyway, like I said, I went to God and lived a life of daily crying out to God for forgiveness.

I: About the affair?

S2: About the affair, about who I was. Things were okay for a while, a long time. It was deep down inside. No one knew. I was in the military; we changed stations. I went from [city name] out to [another city name].

I: Did other men in the military know what you were doing?

S2: No. The reason I said military was because we changed stations. It was always a private thing for me. No body knew. So, no contact with that girl or anyone else as far as that was concerned. And the next thing you know men at church are asking me to have coffee. I go to church, and some guy would say, “You know, let’s go for coffee,” and he would tell me about this relationship he’s got on the phone with this woman that does type of a supply or whatever, and this guy would say this and that, and it was like, what is going on? My best friend who moved away, he calls me up and says that he’s in love with another woman. My wife and I have a very good relationship with him and his wife, get together, watch each other’s kids grow up, and so, he’s in love with another woman it was just hitting me from all sides and ultimately, I felt like I had to tell my wife because I was trying to counsel these men and yet this was hidden, this was something that was going on because relationships were still a problem for me as far as wanting to take them in ways, wanting to cross boundaries with women that I never should cross.

I: Were all these men talking to you about different affairs and sexual acts outside of their marriage?

S2: Not necessarily always sexual acts, but yes. Just inappropriate relationships and things that they had going on and they were bringing it to me, and I was being asked, I thought, God was saying, “You know, you have a lot to offer here with your story, and

I'm going to use you, but you still have a lot of cleaning up to do, and you got a lot of things to come out with, and you need to get your marriage right." So ultimately, I ended up having a confession with my wife that ended up being only a partial confession. The other stuff started to come back later, so things were good for a while! And then the other stuff started coming back to haunt me until we deteriorated terribly.

I: So you confessed to her about the affair?

S2: Correct.

I: What didn't you confess to her?

S2: Um, at that time we really didn't know about sexual addiction. It was more on the lines of ... in particular, one woman that was a wife of a friend who would have inappropriate communications with me, and I would ... it would start out with, "Hey, how's the kids? What's going on?" whether it was a chat or an email or whatever, and it would always turn to a sexual nature, and I would usually get disgusted with myself and shut it off. **I think when you talk to sexual addicts, particularly those who are believers, you're not happy with yourself. There are some people that live in this lifestyle, and this is what they want, but for me, any event would bring guilt and shame.**

I: You would feel guilt and shame because of your religious beliefs?

S2: Absolutely, yes. **I was wanting to be righteous, and I was wanting to be a good husband. I was wanting to be a good father. With this particular person, even though I came clean with everything else years ago, this particular person was someone who was in the dark. I allowed that situation to stay in the dark, and it caused me guilt and shame and anger.** I would tell her to not contact me. Six months

would go by and she would – “Hey, how’s the kids,” you know. I didn’t tell my wife about that.

I: How long did that go on?

S2: Because it had been going on in some point in time whenever I came clean to my wife about my past ...um, but it was in dormancy at the time whenever I told her, so I didn’t even think about it. But it’s something, if I was right, I would have thought about it.

I should’ve for my wife’s sake so that it would be in the open, but it was something that Satan was able to kind of keep tucked there, and ultimately it came back again. My wife and I were in a terrible tailspin and in early 2004, I had another affair, and I was terrible.

We were not getting along very much. There was a lot of bickering. There wasn’t any closeness there. There was intimacy, but not true intimacy. There was a lot of anger, probably coming from me from this other woman that had come back again, and she wouldn’t quit. I hadn’t come clean about that to my wife, and I had anger about that. This was at the same time when lay offs were really starting to first happen, so I had work situations and frustrations and stresses, and I had a mental conversation going on like “She doesn’t love me. This is just a terrible place.” There was one point where I was getting ready to leave because I had to go to [city] to the corporate offices where there was going to be lay offs for several of my team members, and I wasn’t happy about it. I was packing to leave, and she and I got into a big argument. In that she said, “I hate you.” I just replayed that in my mind the whole time. That was the initiation of the second affair that happened. I went to [city], and I kept hearing, “I hate you. I hate you. I hate you.” In my mind, that would say, “I hate you. You’re a loser. You’re a terrible father. You’re a terrible

this and that.” I was letting Satan deceive me in all those things. Ultimately this other woman was there to try to console me, and I allowed it. So, in June 2, 2004, I don’t know what it was, but I had a home office and my wife came downstairs and ... although I had broken it off with the woman I had an affair with, I worked with her, and I had to deal with her that day with a customer. And my wife came downstairs and said, “What’s going on?” And although there was nothing going on really, I was being deceitful and it was just like static all around me. What ended up happening with the one woman was I just turned her off. All her chat, all her e-mail, anything would just get dumped into a bucket in my computer, and I just totally ignored her.

S2: The first woman you talked about?

I: The one I was telling you about that was sending me e-mails and it would come in cycles. Well my wife who can’t even turn on a computer, so I had this stuff hidden back in filters. So she sits down and in three clicks, she has all these e-mails popped up that I’d never even seen. They’ve just been filtered back there, and they are crude, and it’s terrible. And it was like just a flaming, I call it the flaming sort of righteousness, you know. There was a spiritual battle going on around me, and I mean, the air was thick and God had said, enough’s enough. And I could just feel that sword, that flame of righteousness pierced my heart and yank it all out, and that was kind of my day of reckoning. That was June 2 of 2004, and from that day on has been a journey of recovery and healing and understanding and coming to understand pains and wounds and things like that.

I: On your day of reckoning in June of 2004, can you tell me exactly what happened with you. Is that when you confessed to your wife?

S2: That's when I confessed, and it's hard for me to remember now because it was such an emotional state and so, I think, spiritual too. Because at the time, as a person who loves God, you're crying out to God the entire time. Especially because the time second time, you think, how could that happen? You don't really want it to happen. Why do you let it happen. How do you get that out of control? And yet I can remember praying, I can remember being in my hotel room. I travel a lot, and this woman had called me, she wanted me to come over, and I know I shouldn't go, and I'm praying to God, "God, I don't want to go over. I don't want to go over there." And yet, somehow, I go over there. And I remember after I left being so remorseful and so repentant and just torn up. And, you know, I can look now and I think that the attack, the whole spiritual battle that's going on is, it just would have to be amazing to be able to see it. Like I said, that day, I could feel it all around me.

I: You had said that you continued to pray to God for your behavior to stop but you continued to struggle with it, so how did that affect you?

S2: Oh, you just feel terrible, until ultimately you become very upset with God. You know, why did you make me this way? Why did you make me with such a personality that can be so big and so overbearing and so right and so wrong? **When I would cry out to God, it would be out of shame and out of guilt, just wanting to be forgiven. I would want to be changed, but deep down you don't really want to because there's so many things about that personality that I rely upon and that I know that deep down, these are gifts from God that God wants me to utilized for the betterment of the kingdom. He's made you this way for his purposes and that's very good. I want to be the guy that can walk into any situation and help, but that also is the same**

personality tendencies that lead me down a path of destruction because Satan uses it to mess me up. Early on my recovery, I was told that I needed to get mad. I needed to vent my anger and resentment with God.

I: So, you resisted getting mad at God?

S2: Yes, I thought it was wrong. I thought, what good does it do? I was holding that anger in, and it was through counseling that I was shown that I was angry and that I needed to let it go. I needed to vent, and it wasn't so much that I expect God to change anything, but I need vent to release it and let it go.

I: I see, so you would suppress your anger and let it build? Was that your process?

S2: Correct. It wasn't until I started counseling. I went to Every Man's Battle and the counselor said there, "You need to let your anger out. You need to let it out."

I: What were you angry about?

S2: All those things, why did you make me this way? Why do I have this personality that could be attractive or why do I want to be the fun guy? Why am I so passionate? Why can't I just let things go? Why can't I be okay without sex? Why do I need a woman to affirm me? All these different things that were just tearing me up. Why? Why? Not understanding at the time, when you start to cry out, you have no real understanding. My wife was asking why as well, of course. "How could you?" and I got no answers.

I: Did that have an affect on your behavior, when you started to get mad at God?

S2: Yeah, because you're a perfectionist. You want everyone else to be perfect, right. You're striving to be perfect. You got all these deceits and all these half-truths and all these things going on. **In your mind, whether it's getting your coat on or going out to your car, dealing with a co-worker or whether the bedroom is straightened up at**

home, for me, I'm very process oriented, so there's a certain expectation of myself about how I'm going to accomplish something. Because I had so much messed up in other places, I strove for perfection wherever I could. You're like the control freak, and if you have something that you absolutely can't control, you have a tendency to over-control everything else.

I: Because you felt you were imperfect in certain areas, you tried to be perfect in other areas of your life?

S2: The places you can be, you try to be, and that then causes stress. You're striving to be absolutely perfect except ultimately, you lose control in some way, and for me, like I said, it's never been about imagery or getting lost in pornography. For some reason, that disgusts me. It's that relationship aspect that ultimately would lead to the sexual event that was part of what would affirm me.

I: So you said that you always strove for perfection ...

S2: Well, because you're living this double life, right? Deep down at night or in my hotel room, I'd be crying out to God, "I'm so sorry, and I'm so angry, and I'm so sorry and I'm so angry. Why am I this person? I want to be a righteous man. I want to be a good husband, and I want to be a good father, and I can't." So you're living that life, so your regular daily life, it's either perfect or you're angry with anything that's not perfect because that's the only way you can maintain control. You become controlling about things, and if it's not working then you become angry.

I: How does that tie into being an evangelical Christian?

S2: Multiple ways. First off, you're trying to control, and being an evangelical Christian, in order to really have worship and to really have the faith that God wants you to have,

then you got to let go and let God., and you got to surrender. Someone with my personality and my addiction, surrender is not even [laughs] within the realm of possibility, especially if you're not in a healing journey. So surrender was never part of it. It was more about white knuckling it. I'm going to do this and I'm going to be in control. So the two would go against each other, and your entire life is about repentance and not about joy. The joy and the worship and restitution of being healed and saved you're worship is all about, "I am so sorry."

I: Do you feel like you were surrendering to God when you were asking Him to take it from you?

S2: Not at the time when I was in my addiction. I think there are points where it may sound that way, but I had no real understanding of what that meant.

I: Did you have any type of counseling prior to EMB?

S2: We had sought counseling a couple of different times for marriage issues. At EMB, of course, there's group counseling and soul sessions, one on one. After that, was going to a counselor here in [city].

I: When you went to marriage counseling before you went to EMB, was it helpful?

S2: No. It was helpful as far as certain marriage issues. We might get a tool here or a tool there, but at the time when I said our marriage was in a terrible tailspin, we were going to a Christian counselor. We were meeting with him regularly. After the other affair, I had went back and told him, and he said, "I knew something like this was going to happen," and it was very frustrating, and I got very upset with that person. If you felt this way and you're the professional, why didn't you break it down and say, "Hey, you guys got to get real."

I: Did the counselor feel that you were not being honest in the counseling sessions?

S2: He didn't specifically say that he thought there would be an affair but basically said that he knew that something big was brewing. I guess because there was so much pain, and yet when we would sit down and he would ask us questions, we would have a response that made sense. I thought we were working on the marriage. My wife thought we were working on the marriage, and yet this person thought that there was a hidden turmoil and it didn't go anywhere.

I: You didn't disclose the past affair in counseling?

S2: I did, yeah. From my standpoint, I thought it was going well in counseling. I was upset because the counselor felt this undercurrent and didn't tell us about it until after the fact.

I: You felt like you had full disclosure during the counseling sessions on your part.

S2: Yeah, I thought I had.

I: You got saved in your early twenties, and your first affair was after you were born again.

S2: As far as what we would define as a physical affair, versus Biblically, I'm sure that there were things before that.

I: Prior to the physical affair, did your behavior consist of mostly masturbation and fantasy?

S2: Yes.

I: You said you had felt guilty about masturbating and fantasizing even in high school.

Did the masturbation or fantasy ever go away after you got saved or did anything change for you after you were saved?

S2: Yes, I felt guilty before, but just as a Christian upbringing, if you will, and that it was always terrible and wrong. At some point in time I came across the Bible verse where, um, and I don't remember what it is right now but one of the lineage of Christ where He spilled His seed on the ground and God was really not happy with that, and that was always really in my mind as life was going on. So yeah, it was always a sense of guilt. There were times when I think it wasn't there, but there was never a thought of sobriety or striving for sobriety or even understanding sexual addiction.

I: So the guilt about masturbation and sexual fantasy was still the same even after you got saved even though you distinguish it as a different Christianity?

S2: Yeah.

I: Can you go into a little bit more detail about how your first affair came about?

S2: It was someone I worked with. Someone I had to spend time with everyday, and we were both in the military, she was a military person, and again it was just about relationship and spending that time, having my wife expect things from me from a husband, father, household whatever, I think. It seems so selfish now, but we would fight, and I would have a wife that was bickering with me all the time and then here was this woman that would want to talk and spend time with me and not bicker and harass me from that standpoint. And ultimately it led into a ... she was single and, I'm sure, looking back now, she had issues of her own, and until ultimately it led to some sexual experiences together. Not very many, but that doesn't matter, but it was the time we spent. I don't know, it was a long time ago.

I: So just to summarize your behaviors, they were affair driven? You would act out sexually through physical or emotional affairs?

S2: versus?

I: Versus other things like pornography or ...

S2: Yeah, I've never been into prostitution or call girls or anything like that. The use of pornography is not something I was into. It's always been more about – I always had to be afraid of having beers with gang and, all of a sudden, finding myself sitting there talking with one woman. **So, what is the trigger? What is the thing about it that can bring about the sin? I just have to be careful because it's not like I want to go in and sit down with a group of co-workers and have a few beers because ultimately I find myself just all of a sudden sitting there, and I'm talking with one woman.**

I: Okay, so that's been the pattern for you in your journey through the addiction?

S2: Yes.

I: You said that the household expectation was a frustration with your wife and that's where a lot of stress came from. Can you talk about that more?

S2: Um, she stayed home, and I was the military person, the computer geek if you will. I would get home, and we had a young daughter, and it would either be time for me to take our daughter to get off work, and all types of selfish behavior on both of our parts as far as that was concerned. And that wasn't the only stress, we argued, what did we argue about – it was about the household or it was about, it could have been about church because, like I said, I was a very young Christian at that time, and my wife wanted someone to be a strong spiritual leader for the family, and I definitely wasn't that at that time. And so that caused tension for us.

I: Did your wife feel like you weren't meeting those expectations?

S2: I think so, and of course, so she would lose respect, and so then without respect ... and there was no concept of unconditional for either one of us at that time – unconditional love or unconditional respect, you know? And understanding that's what God wants out of us at any point in time, right, so of course, that would start a vicious cycle. She didn't respect me, I wouldn't love her, that would lead to sexual tension – tension overall that would lead to sexual tension and it would just escalate. At the time, I was hugely into bodybuilding and working out, and there were women around and it was military life, and it lead me to places that I didn't want, really ... but yet, I thought I did at the time.

I: Can you talk about not feeling like you could be that spiritual leader of the family?

S2: Well, first off, it's an understanding of that's what she wants. It's not like she said, "I want you to be a spiritual leader," you know, but looking back now and knowing what I know, that's what her heart was crying out for. But it was more along the lines of why can't you do this or why can't you do that. Why do you always have to fight me on this or why can't you just um ... and it's not just about taking the trash out, I've always done that, and it's not about being with my daughter. I was always very engaged with that. I don't know what it was [laughs] to tell you the truth, I can't remember, but deep down I was also always in a place where I was always young but I was always having to be a leader, you know what I mean? So even in church, in church, we were the young couple, and I didn't feel like I could – I didn't grow up. I didn't, I couldn't ... To this day, although I know my Bible very well, I can't quote the books of the Bible yet I think that's the foundation within any Christian upbringing. So, to know what it is to be a spiritual leader, I had no idea.

I: Did some of your understanding come from the understanding that the man should be the head of the house as an evangelical concept?

S2: I think from her standpoint, yes, although she never had that in her home. Like I said, there were family issues on both sides, but she was able to have a checkpoint in her life and when she got married and she was pregnant and became a mother and a wife and she's going to do right from here on, and she did an exceptionally good job of being able to do that. She had upbringing, knowledge, thoughts about that type of lifestyle in which I would be the father and the spiritual head of the family and all this stuff that I had no knowledge of. My mom was always kind of the spiritual person. And so that would often point to financial, although I would bring home the bacon, if you will, my wife would write the checks out or maybe even be involved or whatever, but that could always be a contention as well because she wanted me to do that stuff.

I: Okay. Talk about when you decided to get help for your sexual addiction.

S2: When I decided to get help, like I said, I had broken it off with this woman although I did not, at that moment, think that me and my wife were going to stay together necessarily. I didn't know where everything was going. I was in total chaos, and yet, on that day, even though so many things were out of control, on that day, I felt God's hand.

I: Can you talk about that in a way as if to someone who wouldn't understand what that means – in God's hand?

S2: Well, there were things that I was seeing. For my wife to come into my office that morning looking for that, or for whatever she was looking for. It just caused a quickening in my heart and in my body. Normally, I'm as cool as a cat. Shamefully, I could lie my way through anything. There was an electricity in the air. It was just like a static feeling

in the air. It was like, "Something is going on." And this has been going on and we've had all this stuff throughout the years, and I could just feel that this is the climactic moment for us.

I: Were your wife and the other woman all in the same room?

S2: No. I was on the phone, the woman was in Texas, and my wife came downstairs and said, "Who are you on the phone with? What's going on?"

I: And you felt something there?

S2: I couldn't move. I remember just pushing my chair back and it was just like, I can't breathe, I can't breathe. And then, boom, she popped those e-mails up and all that stuff, and I don't even know what's in there, and she's reading them, and I'm just ... and of course at that moment, you realize, this is the woman I love, and this is my gift from God. And it was like, boom. I felt the dagger that hot red hot flame suck my sin.

I: So your wife found the e-mails that day, your wife, and she came down to confront you with them?

S2: No, she came downstairs, confronted me about whoever I was on the phone with, and what's going on, and what's wrong with your face, and why can't you breathe [laughs], and boom, turned right around, and maybe in three mouse clicks found these filtered e-mails within my Outlook or whatever.

I: Okay. How did she get to the e-mails? Was she looking for something or she knew something was up?

S2: I always have e-mail up. I always have it turned on. I forget what type of filter I was using, but it creates a folder and whatever you want to filter out, it just throws it into a folder that's hidden.

I: Did she suspect something and that was why she checked the e-mails, or did they just happen to be up?

S2: She'll tell you, she doesn't know how she did it, and she doesn't know why. She felt directed. **She was 100% driven by the spirit of God to achieve that.**

I: She felt like God spoke to her?

S2: Not so much in an audible direction, but again, she'll tell you that she can't do anything with a computer without me. The e-mail might of been up, but it was just the starter page, and she was able to go back in there and, in just a few short clicks, pull these things up and find them. She was directed by the Holy Spirit to bring this thing to a head.

I: Okay, so after she found the e-mails, what happened after that?

S2: It was about two weeks of, and she'll tell you it was longer than that, and it may have been three or four weeks of disclosure of what I could deliver at any point in time. At first, that day, we talked about the woman that was on the phone, and what we needed to do about that and the e-mail. And so what I needed to do about that, what I should have done years ago – contact my friend, that was a terribly hard call to make – another very spiritual person, he and I grew up as neighbors and he would take me to his church, and we would go to his youth group and do all this stuff, and I had to call him up and tell him that his wife was ... that I and she were having these kinds of conversations, and no matter how many times I tried, I couldn't get her to stop. And he wanted the e-mails, and so we sent him the e-mails.

I: And this is the one you had no physical contact with it was the e-mails?

S2: No physical contact. Right, yeah. My wife said about establishing boundaries and that type of stuff, not knowing whether we would stay together or anything like that. It was the second time, if you will, that I put her through this, but understanding that I didn't have full disclosure the first time. We didn't have any real healing the first time. I just disclosed something that happened ten years earlier. So that was in June, and it was just a period of discovery and disclosure and wanting to just get this out, and not wanting there to be anything to be there for Satan to utilize at any point in time. Not knowing if my marriage would still be okay, but if it was going to be ... knowing that I needed to disclose and I needed to be honest and I needed to come to terms with who I was. Realizing that I had this thought battle going on, wherever it was coming from, partly inside myself and, I think, partly from the spiritual realm, this terrible thought-life – things like being angry and having angry thoughts about my wife. You know, why can't she just leave me alone? why this? why that? Nag, nag, nag. Once my wife went over for 10 days to Scotland, and I just hoped she found some Scot that would make her happy, and stupid stuff like that the enemy lies to you about – like, you know, won't the kids be better off? – maybe I got to live in some apartment or something but won't they be better off, won't they be happier, won't I be happier? Now it's like, what have you been thinking? How could you think this stuff and how could you ... and I realized that this has been going on for four or five months, and I was starting to push that stuff away. I had read Every Man's Battle because I had a friend that was hooked on pornography and he had come to me about it. So I read Every Man's Battle in the fall, and I had really been convicted about this woman who had contacted me. And I think that partly, that conviction led to an understanding that there were so many times in that situation where I was the weak male.

I'm never weak to anybody. Why would I allow this woman to try to destroy me? I wouldn't allow men to do that. Not from a sexual nature, but if they were wanting to destroy my family. When you read Proverbs 5 for the first time, you don't take it for where it is. Anyway, EMB [Every Man's Battle], convicted, woman, anger, may cause greater tension, more conviction, greater tension, snowball ... you know, my wife doesn't know about any of this stuff that's going on. So, I had to lay off of a group of my guys. I had to go to [city] to do it, right before that my wife and I get in a big fight, she says, "I hate you." And that was just, "You're a failure, and I hate you." She never said, "You're a failure," but it was just, I laid these guys off, life sucks. I walk out the door and there's this woman with a coffee and a shoulder to cry on. Okay, so we're in recovery here now...or was I? EMB! So then, I went to EMB in July...

I: EMB being Every Man's Battle?

S2: EMB being Every Man's Battle, yeah. I started to learn, got counsel. Someone had brought up SA at the time – Sexaholics Anonymous. It just started the journey. I started counseling. I started group sessions. I started going to SA. I started a Battle Plan. I started really having honesty, working on any exaggeration in my speech or anything like that.

Dramatic thing [laughs], I see it in my family, my mother in particular. **There's a tremendous amount of exaggeration in my mother's speech. For instance, when she's talking about her grandkids or whatever it is. And we all do that to some extent, I just realized how much I did that in my life, and I didn't want any of it.**

I: So both you and your mom tended to exaggerate details of a story to make it sound better than it actually is?

S2: Correct. An embellishment. It got to a point where I couldn't even play *Clue* with my wife because I got information that she doesn't have. I don't like that [laughs].

I: How are things with your wife now?

S2: Things are fantastic, and then we have our rough days. For instance, this week, I had a friend call me last Friday from church, young beautiful couple. I guess three and a half years ago, he had called me to have a cup of coffee with him, and it was one of those times where I gave him some of my story, and basically, he told me he was struggling with pornography and masturbation. I started to teach him about SA and this kind of stuff, and he's like "eh," and I can look back now, when someone says "sex addiction" or SA or whatever, it like I'm not that, but like I told him last night over coffee, "I've heard some of the worst stories that I ever want to hear, but then for the most part it's just some men that are honest enough and want to get right and know that it takes other men to help them get right." Part of the problem with recovery is that when we started in 2004, there was different material, but no one put it altogether, and that's why I was interested in what you're doing because no one has a real plan. What do you do? I mean, my preacher has no clue. I went to him and told him my story, and he's like, "I don't know what to do. I don't want to judge you." So what do you do? Even churches as big as my friend goes, what do you do? And that's how my friend has gotten so involved, and I've been in there to speak and talk about these things.

I: So, in your experience, whenever you went to your pastor and you heard of other people's experiences, you think that the church does not know what to do about it?

S2: Yeah, yeah, and I think that's why so many men would contact me. They trust me. Even though they may not even know my story, they would still contact me. [Church

name] does a great job with Every Man's Battle and of course, John Eldrich does a lot of work, but it's not as focused on this, but I didn't know about Eldrich until I went to Every Man's Battle, and that's where I learned about Wild At Heart and that work and started studying that. And Patrick Carnes and all the different ... there's material out there, but no one knows it. And it's not until my buddy sits with me and I sit with him and say, "You need to read X, Y, and Z, and you need to do this, that, and the other." I mean, I went to his house the other night, he calls me and he tells me his story, and it's *terrible*, what he's done, and his wife is there, and she's destroyed but yet she's going to stick by him. He doesn't have full disclosure. So that's the first thing ... I said, "Listen, this is your opportunity. You're telling me about something that's happened since August, and you've been together for 17 years, you've been married this long. You need to search your heart, and you need to let God take you. Don't leave anything buried." I could tell he was squirming, but he was saying, "Yeah, I got full disclosure." Well, two days later. Anyway, there's not that much out there; there's a tremendous amount of data but no one has put it together. My wife will tell you that the one thing that she lacked and the one thing that's she's trying to press upon you people that bring us in is that there is hope. There are things that can be done. There are answers. Whenever she was saying, "Why?" and I didn't have an answer for her back then, and yet to understand that over a period of time that I have codependency on her or that I had put her into a theistic, I had made her a deity of my life, which leads back to codependency. To look at my father issues, my abandonment issues, and what those do and how those are part of my make up. Look at personality traits and Myers-Briggs and all that, go through all that stuff, and I did, I went into all that stuff.

I: Before you said that being the spiritual leader was stress-inducing for you back then.

Where are you now with that?

S2: It can still cause stress, but the difference now is that my wife can be upset with me and ... here's an example. We had a ballgame here in [local township], my son, my 10 year old plays basketball, and we had a ballgame and we were leaving, and my wife put a meatloaf in before we went and my son, a couple of kids and their families decided that they were going to stop and grab a sandwich somewhere together. We were invited, and my wife was kind of not happy about it, and my son said something rude [laughs]. She said, "Well, what am I going to do about my meatloaf?" and he's like "Feed it to the dog," even though he loves her meatloaf. So she's not happy, and she's like, "I don't care. I'm not fixing dinner anyway." We turn around, and she's like, "You go, you deal with it," and I'm like, "Okay," so we turn around and we go back and me and my son go in, and she's upset, and so she stays in the truck [laughs]. And, you know, I can laugh about it. She said it was so freeing when I could allow her to be angry.

I: That's something that you wouldn't allow her before?

S2: Oh no. She wasn't happy, something's wrong. I always wanted to please and keep everybody happy that was around.

I: And now you...

S2: I can't, for the most part. I struggle, and I have my issues still, but yeah.

I: How many affairs have you had?

S2: Define.

I: How many physical affairs, e-mail affairs, or any other affairs that were not physical sexually.

S2: As far as physical, there were the two main physical affairs that I talked to you about.

There was one time early on in our marriage where I got totally plastered, and I have absolutely no idea what happened, but I know something happened.

I: Like a possible one night stand?

S2: Yes. Most likely.

I: Okay, and the e-mail emotional affair, was that the only one?

S2: Yeah, I think. Part of me thinks that there's no way that's true, but yeah. The only one long term, I mean there were communications with other women, but not necessarily sexual in nature.

I: And the women that you communicated with through the years, were they friends?

S2: Yeah, I can remember in particular one girlfriend from ... I mean it's a terrible boundary because I had slept with her back in high school, and that should be a boundary that's not crossed. But we had a very cordial, I think it was through chat ... discussions a couple of times, yeah. Kind of, what are you doing now kind of thing and that was it, but never ... it never went inappropriate beyond the boundary that I should have never crossed the first time.

I: Did you used to go on to chat rooms?

S2: Never chat rooms, just more like instant message.

I: But only with people you already knew?

S2: Yeah, or somebody that became a friend in some capacity.

I: Okay, so that was pretty much your journey, affairs or emotional affairs with people that you knew. That was the compulsion for you?

S2: Yes, and that's where I would have to be careful. Part of being on the road so much is that I don't go into an office, and so that's a good thing because I don't build relationships with people that way. The main thing is the God aspect part of it, I know that's the big thing that you're talking about. For me, how I had let some of the father issues get transferred to my Heavenly Father, and that became part of His identity in my mind and my relationship and so forth.

I: And that's really the Every Man's Battle piece too, the broken fatherly relationships.

S2: Yes, that's part of it of course, but for me, I get more of that from Eldrich than I do from Arterburn.

I: Can you talk about how your religion has had a helpful impact on your view about sexuality?

S2: Oh yeah, when you have disclosure and when you really have let that go, and I think that ultimately that what was the covenant was meant to be. There is a moment of having true worship with God in that sexual experience, and it is beautiful wonderful worship that my wife and I were able to share together that you can't have when you have all this baggage and all this sin and all these wounds. So the intimacy with my wife is more about God and worship. There is necessarily about my needs and desires or her needs and desires, I mean, it's overall big, and those can be at the forefront sometimes, but also there's those moments when it's just pure worship, and that was never there before.

I: And that's the place where you two came to?

S2: Yes, and then when you talk about worship in another sense then you're actually having an understanding of the cross and forgiveness and salvation, that you're forgiven and then worship becomes about worship and not about you just crying out your sorrow.

I: Have there been instances where your religion has had a harmful impact on your view about sexuality?

S2: I think surrender is just so hard, and you keep falling back. Religion, as an organization, it's bad in so many ways. Our culture gets into it, you know, what's right? what's wrong? The Bible and its word, Christ and God, are holy and righteous and they're true and they're foundational, but there are things within the church that we can get so wrapped up in that it can become harmful.

I: Was there a circumstance that happened for you?

S2: My church in particular, when all this first started, I wanted to establish an accountability program and was really trying to reach out to them. Church is like a place where you go to celebrate your perfectness and righteousness, and to me, church is a place that you go to heal your affliction and your wounds and your pain to build strength with one another. Everybody wants to put on that pretty face when they walk into the church building and be happy, and it just drives me nuts.

I: Where you like that at one point?

S2: Oh yeah! Aren't we all?

I: I mean, was that an element that perpetuated your hiding behavior, for example?

S2: It can be, you know, I mean, don't we have a tendency to be two-faced? I mean, C.S. Lewis wrote about it, in Christianity, talking about how we act in church and stuff, and it does. I think it can perpetuate ... we're not honest! And I'm not just talking about my church, I'm talking about any church. And it became frustrating, when you can't even play *Clue* with your wife because you got little bits of facts about stupid stuff that you have to ... I had to quit! I couldn't breath. And yet, you go and sit with people that you

love and that you know love God and you know that they got issues, and they are just carrying around this baggage, and they just give you a smile and act like nothing's wrong. And it just drives me nuts.

I: Are you saying that you did that at some point and got past that?

S2: I'm saying sure, absolutely. I'd fight all the way to church and open the car door and be grumbling, and open the car door and be like, "Hey brother, how you doing?"

I: And now you are more comfortable with your imperfections?

S2: Yeah. And it was funny, like I said, I was working with this couple last Friday night, and for me to say, "Have you noticed how in the last few years, I'm pretty much very straight up and sometimes it may sound a little hard but that's because I got to be honest," and they agreed, they understood and they knew what I was talking about as far as seeing that change in me.

I: How many years have you been sober?

S2: I don't have a full year of sobriety right now. I had three years, and I lost sobriety.

I: So three years and you lost sobriety, what happened?

S2: Nothing major, just stress and just not holding to it and not being part of a brotherhood, if you will, not being a part of SA.

I: Did you have another affair?

S2: No, no, no, no, no. Masturbation. Personal tension release, if you will.

I: Okay, so masturbation is also considered a relapse for you.

S2: Any, any, yes. Any sexual behavior outside of having it with your heterosexual wife.

I: Only masturbating one time made it a relapse, or was it a lapse for months where you got away from recovery and you came back?

S2: No, yeah, one time is considered a relapse, and it was like I lost my sobriety. I had three, almost three and a half years of sobriety and I lost my sobriety.

I: Okay, so now you have just under a year.

S2: And I kind of went with, don't care, don't whatever, and then back in November of 2007, I kind of came clean with all that and told my wife that I had been participating in masturbation. It was just a couple of events, and I told her about it in November of 2007, and then I wanted to get straight and everything, but I was kind of a sober drunk, if you will.

I: So that means that you didn't go to the meetings, you didn't...

S2: No, I haven't been. Clear out where I am, at the time, they only had meetings on Saturday mornings, so I've always held to my accountability group, but I hadn't been going to meetings. As a matter of fact, I haven't been, I've been trying to get in touch with them now to try to get back. I want to restart. But I've been a sober drunk, if you will, and I wanted to restart.

I: Okay, so that's been about 8 months or so that you consider yourself sober?

S2: No, no, I just restarted. I've been a sober drunk and I want to restart, and I actually had set my date to the 15th of January.

I: Okay, so about a week?

S2: Yeah, as far as re-setting my date.

I: Right, okay, so that's what you feel is your sobriety, about a week?

S2: Yeah.

S2: The only other factor that I didn't talk about but was a clear wound for me eight months of sobriety in, I was devastated and didn't know what was going on, and God

revealed to me that my high school sweetheart, we were together for two years, went to college together, we'd separated, and we'd have our one night flings here and there, and she became pregnant, but she got an abortion, and so I have a lot of post-abortive issues. I was devastated. I found my wife said, "What is going on?" and she was very much on alert, she was very much sensitive to my moods now. She said, "Something's going on," and I'm like, "I know, but I don't know what it is," but I was coming up on the anniversary from the point of when the abortion took place, and I just remember, you know, he doesn't even have a name, and I was devastated by that and spent some time there.

I: You had stated that you had difficulty with this when you were younger, how is the relationship going in your marriage with you being expected to be the spiritual leader?

S2: From a head of the house standpoint, I think it's good. I am very involved and engaged from a spiritual standpoint. That's not to say that we don't have our disagreements about what should happen here or there. Although I am very much in touch from a spiritual standpoint more so than my wife when it comes to an emotional state, I've learned to trust because that's the gifts that God has given her. So, we've learned that. Just like any other couple in a relationship, there are role conflicts, and my wife desires to be taken care of and to be protected. Sometimes I get it right, [laughs] sometimes I get it wrong. We continue to work on it.

I: Would you define your relationship as an equal partnership as far as the hierarchy is concerned?

S2: Yes, but that's a very complicated discussion, right. It's an equal partnership, but again, you're back to those roles.

I: What do you define as your role in the marriage now?

S2: Spiritual leadership. The main thing is that I am to love my wife. It's hard to explain.

For me, I need to provide that spiritual guidance. My wife is still one that more readily turns to God, but I'm learning as far as when to turn in prayer. This weekend was hard and my son has had 6 seizures in the last three days, and my wife's mom is dealing with cancer, so to know that my wife is in a tough place and to sit down and to pray. To take her by the hand when she's really stressing and to say, "Let's give this to God." To be open to what God is trying to tell me. For instance, my son's seizure the other night got really bad, and I heard him upstairs. I came up and he was in full seizure just trying to stay on his feet, and I get a hold of him and his back is arched and he's stiff as a board, and I'm trying to maneuver him, and I just wish that he knew that I was there and collapse into my arms and just let me lay him down and comfort him. So, Sunday morning, I was just like, "God, what is going on here? I can't bear that again." and God spoke to me, "How do you think I feel when you try to control your life, and when you try to do it all, and I try to take you in My arms, and you're stiff and unyielding and just won't settle into my will," and that really broke my heart Sunday morning. As normal men, I think, we'll take that and we won't share that, and I took that and I shared it with my family, and I shared that in church, and it was good.

I: Okay. So when you're wife needs you, you try to be her backbone?

S2: Absolutely, and that's one of the hardest things today because now there's this whole culture of mixed messages of where women are. There's nobody to speak for a woman that wants to be righteous and follow God and respect her husband, and to think that I can't be the spiritual head of my family as God intends and my wife be my mutual

partner. It's complicated! The culture will look at that and say that you can't, just like they reacted to Sarah Palin, if you will. The culture doesn't accept the fact that I can be the head of the family, and my wife can be my mutual partner. If you follow the word, but yeah, it's just complicated. Me and my two sons and my dad actually went to Promise Keepers. Those things are just awesome. So, you're trying to work it out, and to be able to live in that place of imperfection and know that we need our Savior and we need the cross. It's something that you do work on, and on the other side of eternity, when we're looking back, we'll be able to have it all figured out.

I: What are your views about homosexuality and sexual addiction?

S2: I don't know whether it's five or ten percent as far as what may generally happen is that these evangelical Christian men are struggling with same sex issues, and/or things can escalate to, which that wasn't part of my issue, as far as pornography and the different ways of utilizing pornography where they end up in some same sex act by accident, if you will. I never quite understood it. In some groups and some of the things we talk about, you have to be careful, it can come across as locker room speak and sometimes they can get upset. I've had that happen a couple of times, we have in group. They're there, and there's not a lot of help, not that I've seen. In college my ex-girlfriend became pregnant, but she got an abortion, and so I have a lot of post-abortive issues, and that's also what I'm seeing quite a bit in these cases. As I talk and work with other men, we discuss this stuff.

I: That they are having these issues over a past abortion?

S2: They're discovering the pain and stuff that they didn't know was there.

I: So with homosexual men, is it not talked about? You said that they don't have a lot of help.

S2: It's not talked about. We spent a tremendous amount of time, probably a year went by, with one of the guys we went to EMB with, and it wasn't until that year went by and we were spending time in this small group together that we had formulated, and finally he had revealed it to us, and he was upset with us because some of our attitude about some of this other speak..

I: About talking negatively about homosexuals?

S2: Not about homosexuals but more about, just more sensitive to the female side of what we were talking about. Even when EMB was here that year, they had a session, round-table if you will, for those that were struggling with same sex issues, and that's how they talk about them, same sex issues, and I think like one or two people showed up. It was really hard. There were like seventy-something guys participating in this, and like two of them are struggling ... or two of them were willing to meet and talk about it. It's really hard. I've seen Focus on the Family and their program, the one for bringing up boys, what Dr. Dobson had done, and they spent a couple of weeks ... and that's the best and only real program I've seen around.

I: To help people...

S2: To help people that are struggling, but not from a sexual addiction standpoint.

I: So to help people convert and not be homosexual anymore, that Dobson?

S2: Yeah.

S3 Edited Synthesis

I: Can you tell me about the nature of your sexual addiction?

S: At a very early age, I remember that family life wasn't the best. My dad was a member of the family but just wasn't an involved person. I remember finding his pornography magazines. Some people talk about how they saw something and it just changed everything, and I think when I saw those magazine, I was eight or maybe nine years old, and it was just one of those experiences where you just go, "Wow!" It sounds very cliché-ish, but to say that was a good escape from the realities of the things that were happening. **At the time, early on, it was just fun. Later on it became, hey I'm feeling bad and I know a way to make me feel better. It was more about stress relief for me.**

In the big book, it makes mention that we felt lonely, inadequate, unworthy, and afraid. However, when there were times of either viewing pornography or of fantasy, it was just the way of not having to think. I call it noise, in a way. Anything to avoid really getting to what I'm all about. It wasn't such a compulsive thing at that age. My pornography really started to become a problem six or seven years after I've been married. I was 26 when I got married, so 32, 33 years old is when the computers started getting faster. Of course it was dial ups still at the time and it still took like a minute and a half to download a picture, but that was fast at the time. I've often been told that pornography is to the sex addict what crack-cocaine is to the drug addict. It's just quick and immediate, and that's how it's often described. When the internet came, it was just like crack-cocaine. I was hooked immediately. Over time, it just consumed all of my time. In other jobs I had, there would be days where I would call in sick just so I could stay home and browse the internet. I'd search for the end, and it was never there. **There was always more to be**

found. It seemed that no matter how much time I spent, I could spend days out there and never see the same thing twice. It was just a constant, constant searching and searching, and just getting sucked in. When it started getting so consuming, I really didn't see it as a problem because I was able to function. **At that point, I was still holding a job. I was still fulfilling my role as a father. I was paying bills, and I don't think I became so consumed that I lost everything. I felt like I still had control of my life. I guess it's all about compartmentalizing, and I was able to keep those two lives separate because I had to be responsible, I had to go to work, and I had to take care of my son, so that's why I thought I could control this. I was still in control, and it hadn't consumed me to the point where all was lost, I wasn't in jail, and I really didn't see it as a problem because I didn't see the effect that it had on others, so I thought that I was still controlling it,** but it became a burden, well not a burden, but with my wife, it was obviously not acceptable.

I: Was pornography in general never acceptable with your wife?

S: Yeah, altogether, it was unacceptable. The first time I got caught, she was like, "That's disgusting." At the time, it wasn't viewed as a big problem, but it was my wife saying, "That's ugly. That's disgusting, and you shouldn't be looking at stuff like that." But it was always unacceptable.

I: So even if you never had a problem with pornography, it was still unacceptable because it was pornography?

S: Correct. Her view was that it was terrible, disgusting, vulgar, demeaning, and all those other things. It was never okay. As time went on and I viewed more and more, she told me that she knows that the images are what I like and that she can't

compare to that, so therefore, I must not like what she has. The thing that was hard to get across to her was that these images were just objects. I don't desire a relationship with the images. They're just objects. There's no personal thing that's involved.

I: But she didn't see it like that? Was that the problem?

S: Right. She thought that that's what I desired. I would start browsing on the internet when she was not home, or when she had gone to bed, and there were times where I would get busted. Then I'd swear it off like, I won't do this again, and I came up with so many strategies and strategies like, I'll go to bed when my wife goes to bed that way she'll know I'm not there, or I just won't touch the computer when she's not home.

I: She'll know you're not there at the computer?

S: Yes, yes. But there would be times when I'd get about at two-thirty in the morning, and my wife's a very sound sleeper. So, I'd get up about two in the morning just to spend an hour or two on the computer. **I would know my wife's schedule the day before or a couple of days before, so I would know when she would be out of the house, and so I knew that I could set that time aside for computer time. Mostly it was just waiting for her to go to bed because that's when I would do most of my acting out, at night time. I would also do it a lot at work.** I guess, they say everyone hits their bottom, and the bottom for me happened when I lost a job due to browsing, not just browsing.

Browsing makes it seem like it's such a casual thing. Just the amount of time I had spent at work downloading. Another thing that never really works are the filters. People say, "Oh, I'm going to put a filter on." You know what? Anybody in my SA group will tell you, those things are just worthless. They do a lot of good, we have one on our computer

at home because I have a 12 year old, but there are always ways of getting around them.
When I lost that job, I had a problem.

I: Is that when you realized you had a problem?

S: That's when I knew. I knew it was getting to be a problem, but I just had to do it. It was a compulsion, I just had to do it. But when I lost that job, I realized, no this is a big deal. So I spent the next three months unemployed. My brother-in-law and I remodeled our kitchen, and then I had found another job. For those three months, I really didn't do any kind of internet browsing at all or fantasizing. When I got back to work, I had that want and desire to do the same thing at work. That's the whole definition of insanity, doing the same thing and expecting different results, and I thought, man, I'm going to lose this job too. And so I got on the internet, and I started to look up sexual addiction. There's different groups, there's SA, there's SAA, there SLAA. There's all kinds of 12 Step groups for sexual addicts. I chose Sexaholics Anonymous because they have the strictest sobriety definition, and the other 12 step groups, you kind of set your own definition. **All the other 12 step program, I believe they deal with things superficially. We find that lust is the driving force behind our addiction, and if you allow yourself to set your own bottom line, then you're allowing lust of a very minimal basis.**

I: That's what you believed going in? Before you even got into SA?

S: No. What drove me to SA was that there were more meetings. There were more meetings and they were more local. That's one of the things that attracted me.

I: That was the primary reason you went?

S: Well, I was going to SA for a month or so and I was still looking at the other programs. After going to SA, because it was so prominent in my area, those were the

only meeting that I went to, but it didn't take very long for me to understand that the bottom line is lust not sex.

I: I see, so after you got involved with SA, their strictest definition of sobriety then appealed to you?

S: Yes, and knew that I still had an option and that I could still go to those other programs. I've never been to those groups, but they allow themselves to maybe masturbate once a week. We had Sexaholics Anonymous believe that the definition of sobriety is no sex with self or others outside of heterosexual marriage, and I think that's what turns off a lot of people because it's heterosexual marriage, which means if you believe that being gay and lesbian is okay then our group is not okay. There are men in our group who struggle with those issues, my sponsor for one. Whether that's your issue, I don't know whether it's a need thing or a good thing or a bad thing, you know. I don't think I ever paid a dime for my addiction. I would be so embarrassed to walk into a store and buy a magazine. I'd be embarrassed. I never rented a video because I'd be embarrassed. So everything was free, but in terms of money lost, potential earnings, things like that. But there are guys in my group who suffer from same sex issues who have gone to jail, they've done jail time for child pornography – they're addiction manifested in different ways but we believe that the common thread through it is lust. Now, I have lust, and this is the way that my lust acts out, and this guys acts out in a different way, so it varies from person to person. We actually women in our group and they'll talk about what it looks like for them. So, if I allow myself to set my own bottom line, it's almost like not dealing with the root of the problem, which is lust. So, I've been going to Sexaholics Anonymous since May of 2006.

I: You said your addiction didn't start until the internet came out?

S: Yeah, that's when it really took off.

I: Okay, because you had started the story with when you were eight years old.

S: Right, well, what those magazines did was that they enabled me to objectify women, not to see them as a person. But to put a label or a name or to say that is somebody's wife, or that is somebody's daughter, but for me it was just an object, and I think that's where the objectification started. When I would look at these magazines, they were objects, they weren't people, they weren't real. So growing up, you want to know what that looked like?

I: Yeah, along with your faith, family relationships, high school, college, marriage and recovery. I guess I would like you to begin from age eight because that's where your story started.

S: Sure. I guess for the first five or six years, I remember going to Sunday school. It was just a Lutheran church. It was not what I would consider and evangelical Lutheran. There are some Lutheran denominations, but it was not that. It was what I would consider, lazy Catholicism.

I: So, they did not have the born-again element?

S: No, not at all. So, I remember going to Sunday school, and my mom says we stopped going to church when I was eight years old or seven, so there was not faith growing up. My dad's family was Jewish, and my dad was a non-practicing Jew. I believe he was a sex addict. I try to look at the signs and symptoms of the things that I've done in my life, and I can see a lot of that in him, the irresponsibility, the non-involvement kind of thing. **I had the same issue. I didn't see it as an issue in my active addiction. I didn't see myself as being a non-participant of things, and my wife always planned things. She**

planned the vacations. She took care of all the bills or if things needed done around the house. I was a follower, so I never really initiated anything, and that became a big problem between my wife and I. It's something that we're still trying to work out. I was not a husband in a spiritual sense. I was not the head of the household. I was not the spiritual leader. I was not the person that my wife could come home to and rely on and depend on. That was a big problem for her.

I: Did you two argue about that throughout your marriage?

S: Yes, and it was always like, okay, I'll do a better job. I understand, I'll do a better job. Very often, I got defensive when she brought up the fact that she always had to tell me what needs done. If she said, "Hey, can you throw a load of laundry in?"

That never bothered me. Where I became defensive was when she said, "Why must I always tell you what to do? Why must I always plan things? Why can't you do this?" That's when I would get defensive. Anyway, he left when I was really young, I was about eight years old, maybe nine, shortly after I found the magazines. I don't know whether he was asked to leave I think my mom kicked him out. I'm not sure. My mom won't tell me. My dad passed away about 12 maybe 13 years ago. That's a funny story; he's the one who led me down the aisle of my church. My dad had become a born-again Christian. It's a very interesting story. Anyway, I have two younger brothers and my mom was a high school teacher, she was a PE teacher and she had to coach all three sports throughout the year to make ends meet, but it was always my responsibility to make sure the dishes were done, the house was straightened up. My mom would cook like a crazy lady on the weekends, this is before microwaves, and put everything in the freezer. Because she had to coach after school, when we would get home we'd go across

the street to the neighbor's house because we were too young. Going up to through 7th, 8th, 9th grade and further up, it was always my job to come home, take the stuff out of the freezer, make sure dinner was put on, the dishes were done. What I learned about love at that point is that love is earned. That's just the way it was. Love was earned. That's what I learned from my mother. And we talk about these feelings of unworthiness, my opinion didn't matter, it never mattered what I wanted to do as long as the dishes were done, as long as dinner was put on the table, as long as the place didn't look like a mess then things were fine and she loved you. But when things weren't like that, she was a crazy lady. Raising three boys on her own, I'm sure it wasn't an easy thing either. I'm not excusing her though. There were a lot of things that she had done that I look back on and I just say, how horrible. How horrible those things were. I remember she had gotten so pissed off at us that, I was nine years old, maybe eight, but she took me and my two younger brothers and said, "That's it I'm done," and she pretended to call somebody on the phone and said, "Okay, I'll bring them right over." She hung up the phone, we got in the car, she drove to the next town over, pointed to a house and said, "Get out. That's where you're living." We got out of the car, and she took off. She left. There's three boys standing on the street crying. She just drove around the block or something and came back. I look back and I think, that's horrible! That is horrible! I have a twelve year old. I can't even fathom doing something like that. You know, that's sick. That's sick thinking. And that's just one of several things.

I: So that was pretty commonplace?

S: Yeah. Yeah, you know just sick.

I: Was she physically abusive too?

S: She ruled with an iron fist, but I know when there was I time I'd get smacked, I deserved it. No, she wasn't physically abusive, but very emotionally abusive. My mom used guilt therapy. So, growing up, I learned that love is learned, and to escape that I would go into fantasies in my head.

I: Sexual fantasies?

S: Yeah, sexual fantasies. To a non-sex addict, this probably sounds bizarre, really sick, but you see an image, and it just burns in the back of your head only to be used later on at night. I can remember the 76 Olympics, I was 14 years old and watching the female gymnasts, and consciously thinking, remember this because I can use this later. So growing up, it was a lot of imagery, so I think that's what added to the objectification. A lot of us talk about how we objectify women as objects and one of the things that we learn to do is instead of saying, oh my wife did this, it's [wife's name] said this, so we put a name there. If someone had an affair, we put a name to that person because it makes it more personal. Just by saying "this lady" or "that person" it makes it an object, it doesn't have any substance, so you put a name to it. And I think that I learned to objectify very early on. In high school, I was a good student, I was the two year captain on our wrestling team. I lettered at three years. I played golf, did the regular high school thing, a member on student council. I had had several girlfriends, nothing that was real serious. I never had sex throughout high school, so I was still a virgin in high school. I started dating my first serious girlfriend when I was a junior in high school, and it was a match made in heaven. I was captain of the wrestling team, and she was captain of the girls' basketball team. So we dated for three years, actually, we dated a year and a half after high school. I went away to college and she went to a different college in another city. It's not like I

was constantly thinking about sex, even at that point because I was dating the same girl for three and a half years, and sex was not a thing in high school. It didn't phase me, I guess.

I: What didn't phase you?

S: The fact that we didn't have sex.

I: Were you born-again in high school?

S: No, when I went away to college. In between when my dad left and high school, there was very little contact between my dad and I. I guess when I was a junior in high school, he would call every now and then and we'd go over to visit.

I: But you weren't really close?

S: No, not at all. If I had never seen him again, it would have been just fine with me.

Anyway, between my junior and senior year in college, it was during the summer time, and my dad had called me. I think my brother may have told me, but a couple years prior to my junior year in college, my dad had become a born-again Christian. My attitude at the time was, "Pff, well good for him because he needs some order in his life or something. At least he's doing something right." I had thought that the term "born-again Christian," I thought they were like the Dudley Do-rights. You know, the clean hair cut and can't listen to rock 'n roll music. That's what I thought when I thought born-again Christian. And so I heard that's what he became, and I thought, good for him, which is funny because his family is Jewish and that's a whole other story. Anyway, the summer after my junior year of college, my father had given me a call. I was a life-guard at the lake, and he had called and said that he was praying for me and he invited me to church. I said, "I can't go to church. I'm a lifeguard, and Sunday's a busy day. It's the busiest day

of the week.” Which was a big lie because I was the head lifeguard, and I made up all the schedules, but it was a good enough lie. I can’t go, it’s a bad day, if it was a Tuesday then I’d be fine, you know. He called me the next Thursday, and told me he’d been praying for me, and I said, “I can’t go to church. I told you last week, I just can’t.” Well the third Thursday he had called me up again, and I thought, I got to get this old man off my back – “ Alright I’ll go to church with you.” He picked me up. It was an independent Methodist church. I had long hair, an earring, and I walk into church and people are greeting me, “Hello. How are you doing?” Very friendly people, you know? And they sang these songs at the beginning, they’re praise songs, I know them now. But the band was good, it was good singing, the preaching was like – this guy knew what he was talking about, and then towards the end they did this thing called an alter call. I thought to myself, what idiot is going to embarrass themselves walking down this aisle? And then we sang a few more songs, and my dad and I went out for brunch. So, I tell him, “I really liked this. Can I come next week?” “Oh yeah! Sure, sure, I’ll pick you up.” He picked me up, again the greeting was nice, singing was fantastic, preaching was good, alter call, and again, I thought, I don’t see anybody embarrassing themselves. That’s embarrassing, I would never do something like that. When out for brunch – “Hey, can I come with you next week?” So he picked me up and we went, the singing was great, the preaching was great, they did the alter call and the Holy Spirit struck me, and I looked at my dad and said, “Man, what a fool I am.” And I walked down the aisle, and he held my hand, and it was the first time I’ve ever seen him cry. This was a man who was kicked out because he was probably a sex addict; my mom said he was heavily into pornography. He eventually became an elder at that church, so I don’t believe in coincidences any more. So anyway,

that's the testimony I have as far as being a Christian. My dad and I, we went out for brunch, and he said, "You know what? Your life is changed now." There are some churches out there that are like, save them and then forget about them, but my dad – I would go back to school, and he would call me. "Okay, what reading have you done this week? Have you read anything? Have you found a church?" – and he was constantly calling me and encouraging me to read and to pray. It wasn't one of those, okay now you're saved, let's work on your brothers. It was a discipleship that he had actually done. I graduated from college and moved back home to [state] for a few months, got a job in [state]. I ended up renting a room with a fellow teacher. My roommate's brother was an elder at this church. It had been a while since I've been to church, and he invited me to come to his church, and it was like the exact same church as my dad's. It was an independent Baptist church, and I eventually became a member, and I was there for 12 years before moving back here to [city] and finding a church here. It took a while, but I know I needed to find a church. By the time I moved, I considered myself firmly grounded. But back in [the state where I was renting a room], I had been going to that Baptist church for a while and I moved down there in 86 and got married in 88. My wife had finished up school in [city] and moved to [state], I like to think, because I was there. But the truth of the matter is that teaching positions were a dime a dozen in my area. So we lived there and I taught in one school system and my wife taught in another school system.

I: Okay, you said you went to high school, and you weren't saved in high school and then went to college and about two years into college, you were born again.

S: Yes.

I: Could you fill in that gap for me between high school and college?

S: Yeah, okay. The girl I was dating in high school in the beginning of my junior year, she went to college and I went to another college, like I said. It was a long distance relationship for about a year until I met another girl out there at my college into my sophomore year, and I dumped my girlfriend and started dating this girl here. That was the first time I had sex. It was my sophomore year in college. I look back on it now and I think, maybe she was a sex addict too because it happened all the time. Then maybe the floodgates opened, I don't know, because I was having a relationship with her but I remember a couple of parties that I'd go to, and I'd bring home a stranger, and it was very casual sex. So we dated my sophomore, junior, and senior year and then I had graduated and moved back to [city], and it was still a long distance relationship. I only stayed in [city] for a couple of months. My best friend who I had graduated with ended up working for a wilderness program, and he would write me and talk about how they live in a wilderness setting with no electricity and very little running water. "I think it'd you'd be great – work with kids who are court ordered." Man, I don't know crap about the woods. What ended up happening was that I moved in with my girlfriend and her mom. So I ended up working in the woods, and it was five days on and two days off, so I was in the woods for five days and for the two days, I was allowed to leave the woods, and her mom thought it would be foolish for me to rent an apartment since I'm only home two days, so I could stay there on the weekends.

I: Were you and your girlfriend involved sexually then?

S: Yes. I was not really active in my church at that time, so it didn't bother me that much. That lasted about four or five months until I found out that my girlfriend and my

best friend were getting it on. So I moved out. I was crushed, you know, I was heart-broken. I ended sharing an apartment with a couple of other people, and I'm not from this city so I on the weekends, I'd buy a case of beer, bought a tv, and I'd just sit at home drinking beer and watching tv on my days off. My boss one day just said to me, "What I was doing this weekend?" I told him how I spent my weekends.

I: So you were a born-again Christian half way into your relationship with your girlfriend, right?

S: Yes.

I: Was there any conflict for you with being a born-again Christian?

S: You know what? No. I still sexed.

I: Premarital sex was not an issue for you at the time?

S: I knew it was wrong.

I: But there was no guilt associated with it?

S: Yes, yes there was. I started having sex my sophomore year in college, and that's when I was dating this girl. I became a Christian after my junior year in college while I was still dating her because I had gone home for the summer and came back, and I knew that that was going to be an issue. I knew how much I liked doing this, but I knew that it was wrong. I don't know how I justified it. Maybe I thought, I'm going to marry this girl anyway, so it doesn't really matter, or I'll just pray about it. **Those were the feelings I had immediately after I became a Christian. That was my junior year into my senior year, so I did have that going on. As time went on, it became less of a problem for me when I was less involved. At the time, I thought that though, I may marry her or I'll just pray about it.** But the sex continued, and there was guilt. But you know

what? There's a million ways to get by guilt. I call it noise. Just get yourself involved in noise. I talk about it in my meeting sometimes. You know, study, just study for exams or do your homework because then you don't have to think about the guilt. When you go to bed at night, turn your tv on real low so you're not left alone with your thoughts, so you just have to hear the tv. So I call it noise, it doesn't have to be clatter just anything to keep me from thinking about what I'm doing is wrong or any kind of self-reflection. Noise can be productive things, like I said, doing your homework or studying for exams, visiting friends. Anything so I don't have to be quiet because when it's quiet then you start thinking about all these things, and you get stressed, you feel guilty. I found a church in that area and I played the part real well. I knew I was saved, there was no doubt about that. I would read the Bible. I played a good part. **The lust was still active, but I went to church every Sunday. I went to Bible study every Wednesday night. There are two services on Sunday, a Sunday morning and a Sunday evening, and I went to all three services. I joined a men's fellowship on Tuesday mornings, and we met around six o'clock before work. So, I did all the outward appearance of things, but internally there was a problem with lust. I wasn't dealing with that on a spiritual level. I was really an active church member while all this other stuff was going on.** I really do believe that when I walked down the aisle with my dad that that was my point of salvation. This varies depending on the religion or the faith, there are some faiths that say you can't lose your salvation, and I believe that you can not lose your salvation. Once you're saved, you're saved. There's nothing that you can do to lose your salvation. You can lose spiritual blessings. I believe that there are gifts in heaven, and you'll lose out on

those things, but you still go. So I believe, once you're saved, you're always saved. And I think that's one of the things I relied on, you know – that's okay, I'm saved.

I: You mean you used that as a rationalization to continue your behavior?

S: Yeah. I'm sure I thought that, and numerous things, like I'll just pray about this later. I'm a sinner. And so a couple months later, this girl dumped me and my boss asked me what I was doing for the weekend. I explained what my weekends were. He said that his wife's sister had just finished up school and "She's going to be here and the three of us are going to the art festival. Would you mind coming along just so she doesn't feel like a third wheel?" I said, "Well what does she look like?" "Oh, great sense of humor! Got a wonderful sense of humor." "Okay, good, good. What does she look like?" "Oh she's got a personality you just would not believe." So you know, I think, aw dog. But this was something that he had set up with her months before. He made it sound very casual, and that's how I met my wife. The car pulled up, she was sitting in the back seat, and I was just stunned. She was the most beautiful thing that I had ever seen in my whole life. So I met my wife in 85. Worked in the woods until 86 and my wife and I had started dating in May of 85, and we didn't have sex for the first eight months, I think. I was only home to two days out of the week, and sometimes it would happen and sometimes it wouldn't happen.

I: That you came home?

S: Oh no, I came home every weekend. Sex. Sometimes it would happen on the weekend, and sometimes it wouldn't.

I: After 8 months?

S: After 8 months, yeah. Because, you know, there just wasn't time.

I: And did you rationalize sex the same way you would with your ex-girlfriend?

S: You know what, at the time, I wasn't going to church. I was only home – I wasn't familiar with the city, and I didn't know anybody. I only two days off, and I was in the woods on Sundays, so for two years, I didn't go to church. I still read my Bible, but I wasn't involved in any kind of fellowship for two years.

I: Was there any conflict for you at this point?

S: No. You know what, only because I guess I had fallen away in a way I guess. It just wasn't a very strong part of my life at that time. My faith really got started back up again when I had moved down to [city] at the Baptist church. I worked in the woods for two years, got tired of working in the woods. I went to a conference and presented a workshop there, and I met a teacher from [city], and she gave me a call about three weeks later on one of my days off that there was a teaching position available down there, and she told me what the starting salary was. So I moved to [city] and got the job. I started there in October of 86 and in November is when I found a faith Bible church. I really started being very active in the church there. My faith really took off. I look back now, and I think how superficial that was **because I was going to church and I was doing all these things, so therefore, I thought I must be a good person. I thought I was doing the right thing with praying, reading my Bible, and the church activities, and I thought that if I continued to do these things then lust won't be a problem anymore. I thought I was doing everything right, but it just wasn't working. At the time, my prayers were, "God take this away. Take this away. God, take this away," and he never did, and there's a reason for that. He purposely didn't take it away because**

now I joined a fellowship where I really have grown closer to my God. If I didn't have this then I would have no need for my God.

I: This was an evangelical church?

S: Yes. We didn't do alter calls though only because my pastor believed that if you've made the decision to walk down the aisle then you've already made a decision. You know, please see me after the service kind of thing. My pastor was very, I don't want to say modern, but his thinking was very evangelical and it was very modernized. We played in a Christian softball league and for a couple of years we played in a Baptist league. My pastor thought, you know what? We're to be light and salt of the earth. How can we be light and salt of the earth if we're just confining ourselves to a Baptist league? We joined a city league.

I: And you were still single at this time?

S: I was still single at this time, yes. We joined the city league because he thought we should be out there evangelizing. That's what his thinking was. Anyway, I moved there in 86 my wife, my girlfriend at the time, moved in 87. She had finished her teaching degree and moved down. Her girlfriend was going to move down with her, but her girlfriend couldn't move down right away and so my wife actually lived with me in my apartment for three weeks, and I was very uncomfortable with that because I knew it was wrong because at this time my faith was really building. This is wrong. We shouldn't be doing this. I was very uncomfortable with the fact that she was there. Three weeks later her girlfriend moved down and they moved to an apartment, and I was very thankful. I loved my wife dearly, but she can't live here right now, it's not right. But we continued to have sex, not often, but it would happen. I look back on that now, and I don't know how I

justified that. I don't know how I got away with it or what my thinking was. How can I justify going to church, and being a youth leader in the youth ministry, and I'm having pre-marital sex. I knew it was wrong, but I did it anyway. She was, at the time, going to a Catholic church, so we weren't going to church together. I would go to mine, she would go to hers, and we would meet for brunch afterwards. I got married in 88, and I've always been faithful. I guess I never really thought of having an affair or anything like that because I was married, I was happy. But now that sex became a regular thing, I expected it, and if it didn't happen, then I'd be angry or resentful. **I think that's what led to the resentment, because it wasn't happening all the time. I thought after I got married, I'd have sex all the time so I wouldn't have to act out sexually. I'd be legit, and I'd quit. It wasn't until a couple of years, perhaps. After a couple of years into our marriage, it started to become a source of contention. I would bring it up and we would have minor arguments, but it just got to the point where I thought that it wasn't worth arguing over it because she's not going to change anything. Then there came a point in time where there were no fights at all because if it didn't happen, that's okay, because I had my computer. That's when I used the computer to blame her because I thought if things were better in the bedroom, I wouldn't have to resort to this.** I remember when I started viewing pornography on the computer, and I just thought, wow! This is awesome! I can have this any time I want now. Before there were websites, there used to be these things called bulletin board services, BBS. Everything was in DOS, and people would right sexual stories and there were chats. There would be a hub, and you would log into the hub, and there might be twenty people who are logged into the hub, and you kind of chat with each other. It was a sex bulletin board service.

People would write stories and they'd submit the stories, and you could read the sexual stories. It wasn't really my bag because I'm visual. Early on, the use of imagery and fantasizing and things like that, that was the last resort, but if I could see something – to read it, I don't get a real big charge out of that. So I subscribed, I don't even know how I found out this bulletin board service. I heard Ann Landers say this, if you put a penny in a jar every time you have sex with your wife or with your husband for the first two years, you can spend the remainder of your lives taking a penny out every time you have sex. And that's what it was. After about two or three years, it became less and less and less, and that just wasn't going to work for me. I had to have this all the time. I remember even blaming my wife because of my pornography problem, "Well, if you would just put out more, I wouldn't have to resort to this." Isn't that a terrible thing to say? That's a terrible thing to say. It's horrible. It's such a lie.

I: Where did you get that expectation?

S: That sex had to be all the time? I don't know. I don't know where that even came from. We were married, we slept next to each other, so it's just natural – you have sex every night. Every night would be fine with me, and when you don't, there's something wrong with that. We started growing apart emotionally because I was so physically-centered. I was so self-centered, thinking about my wants, my desires. I wasn't thinking about her. Just like I would objectify pictures or images, it almost became that my wife was an object. So, I remember one time, she said, "You know, we would have sex more often if you would just tell me what you were thinking. Just share." So I would, and my thinking was, alright, I'll tell you exactly what's on my mind as long as it gets me what I want. So for a week, I would share, "Oh it was a bad week at work today," or "Oh, maybe we

should do this,” and when sex didn’t happen over the weekend, I’d get pissed off. “Hey, I fulfilled my end of the bargain!” As long as it gets me what I want, and that’s what an addict says. “Sure, I’ll do it. As long as it gets me what I want.” That’s what started happening, and I started to get more resentful, more angry – this isn’t happening. Fine, I’ll get it somewhere else, and it’ll be your fault. There’s your justification. We’re married, and this should be happening regularly, and it’s not, so fine. I’ll get it somewhere else, and it’ll be your fault. And that’s when I started going to the computer. Because I didn’t want to go outside of my marriage. In our SA meetings, we introduce ourselves by first name, identify our addiction, and we state our length of sobriety. So very often, I’ll say, my name is [name]. I’m a sexaholic, definitely addicted to lust. My drug of choice is internet pornography and masturbation, and I’ve had thousands of adulterous affairs in my head. Nothing physical, but I’ve had thousands of adulterous affairs. Every time I switched on a computer and switched on an image, I had an affair. Some guys will say that they’ve had numerous physical adulterous affairs.

I: Did your wife know that you were going on to pornography sites?

S: She started to suspect.

I: But you never told her even though you told her that you would get sexual satisfaction somewhere else?

S: Oh, I never told her that. I never told her that. That’s what I said to myself.

I: Oh, okay. And you were going to church regularly at this time as well?

S: Yep, I was still going to church. I don’t know how she found out, but she found out that I was viewing all these pornography sites and confronted me about it. I was livid. I

was scared at first, and I was livid. What right to you have to do this? And all that, and it just caused further separation between us. I said, “You know, okay, I’ll stop.”

I: What were you scared about?

S: Well, there was shame. There was shame about spending hours on a computer, that’s not something that you should be proud of. So there was shame, and there was guilt involved in that. So I said, “You know what? You’re absolutely right. I’ll just stop. I just won’t view pornography anymore.” Because it is wrong – lust. It’s wrong. So I would stop for a week, and then I’d sneak away, and it just continued to be a problem. Actually we had gone to see a marriage counselor after eight years of being married, but we never talked about the problem. It was always about errors in communication. We’re not communicating. We’re not talking to each other correctly or empathically. So it was all about how we talked to each other, communication and expression. That wasn’t the problem! The problem was that I was a sex addict, and I was disconnecting from my wife.

I: And you never brought that up in counseling, that you were going on pornography sites?

S: No, and she didn’t either.

I: So you never volunteered that information in counseling.

S: No, because I didn’t think I was a sex addict.

I: You didn’t see it as a problem at the time?

S: No, no. I thought, once we start having sex, I’ll stop. I won’t have a need to get on the computer.

I: Was there still some guilt and shame surrounding your behavior?

S: Absolutely, yeah, because it was wrong. “He who looks upon a woman with lust has already committed adultery in his heart,” so there was that guilt. So, the pornography

thing continued. We had a son in 96, and we moved back to [city] when he was a year and a half to help care take for her mother. My son has always come to church with me. My son is saved. My wife still doesn't go to church. She stopped going to church when we moved to [city].

I: Is your wife born-again?

S: No. My wife is not born-again, my son is. Very interesting, yes. **We got married in a Catholic church and the priest who married us was very contemporary who had brothers of different Christian faiths. Before we even got married, I told my wife that I was not willing to raise our children in the Catholic faith, but what this priest asked us was, "Are you willing to raise your child in the Christian faith?"**

Absolutely, I had every intention of doing that. So after he was born – because I feel very strongly about my faith. This may be egocentric, but this is the right one! My son always went to church with me, maybe because we had a nursery at our church and my wife didn't but he has always gone to church with me.

I: Is it an issue for you that she is not born-again?

S: I pray about that all the time. I used to witness to her all the time, and it became a source of argument.

I: She didn't like you witnessing to her?

S: No. She would come to church with me once in a while, but she didn't like the forum.

I: So, you would witness to her and she didn't like that. Would she ask you to stop?

S: Yes. Eventually, I just stopped. My son is very worried because my wife is not saved, and he always asks me to talk to her. He's very worried.

When we were living in [another city], she would go to church every Sunday to a Catholic church.

I: So, she is still Catholic, you're wife?

S: Yes. So, when we moved here, she stopped going to church. It took me a long time to find a good church when we moved, but I found one.

I: Okay, so when you went to marriage counseling, you did not admit to using pornography. What happened after counseling?

S: We the stopped marriage counseling, my wife got pregnant.

I: You stopped because your wife got pregnant?

S: No, we just thought things were getting better. We were communicating, so we stopped that. Then my son was born, and for the first couple of years after my son was born, things were okay. **There was no source of contention between my wife and I at that point. The arguments were less. We were working together towards a common goal, which was the raising of our son.** We moved here to [city]. We bought a new computer, a faster one.

I: So you didn't go on to the pornography sites after counseling because things were better?

S: Just occasionally, I think. I would still go on to them, but not with the rigor and fervor I had previously.

I: You mean when previously as in when you were hiding it from your wife back then?

S: Absolutely. After we bought a new computer, it was so much faster, and the pornography started right back up again.

I: How did that process unfold that it started right back up again?

S: Curiosity. I find myself even doing this now. You have an e-mail account, so you pull up your e-mail and you can go on to the e-mail website, and there is an advertisement with a girl in the corner. "Oh, that's cute. Let me just click on that for a second." Or you go to Yahoo! and you see Yahoo! personals, oh, I wonder what that means? Click. And it's just like an alcoholic who takes his first drink, and we call it drinking. We drink with our eyes, so we have to stop with the first drink.

I: Was there any stress in your marriage at the time you started clicking on to the advertisements and eventually got back into viewing internet pornography?

S: I don't think so. It was just there and it started increasing.

I: So you and your wife were still doing well as a couple at the time?

S: Yes.

I: It started to get worse between the two of you later?

S: Right.

I: Because of your pornography use?

S: Correct. Very early in SA, I had to find things to do with my time, and I'd get home from work at two o'clock in the afternoon. My son doesn't get off the bus until three-thirty, my wife doesn't get home until four. That's like an hour and a half by myself and the computer, and that's not good. So I find things to do like grocery shopping. So with the computer, I'd see an advertisement and click on that. I'd think, it's harmless it's just an advertisement. But then that takes you to this and you click on that and that takes you to this so you click on that. Next thing you know, you're spending an hour surfing sites again.

I: You said that you weren't on the pornography sites as much when things were going well with your wife, and once you got a faster computer, you started going on more frequently.

S: Because it was so easy and so accessible. Back when we lived in [city], I'm sure that pornography sites were out there, but I'm sure there's billions of them out there today. They're just growing. It's like the number one industry in the United States, I think. It's like the crack-cocaine, you know? Just one hit, bam! and your hooked. So, you click on an advertisement, and it takes you to a page with of pretty girls. Oh, calendar girls? Sure, I'll see them in bikinis, that's nothing. That's not pornography, it's just girls in bikinis. So you click on that and take a look at it. So, I don't know how it happened or when it happened, but shortly after the bikini pages, I'd go on to sportsillustrated.com, "Oh, I'll look at the sports." So you see the little thing for Sport Illustrated swimsuit calendar and you click on that picture and these pretty girls with skimpy bikinis come up, and you think, "Uh, that's nice," so you just want more and more. Next thing you know. Then you're googling, you're searching for these things. I don't know how long it took me to get started back into that, but it wasn't very long. A month after we bought that computer that I was browsing porn sites again. There would be a couple of times where my wife would bust me at night, and I said, "Okay, I'm going to quit. I'm embarrassed. You're absolutely right." There'd be a huge argument. In a lot of ways, I was thinking, I'm not harming anybody. I'm not going out and having an affair. I'm not harming anybody! But I didn't see what it was doing to our marriage.

I: What about your faith?

S: I didn't think about it. I still prayed. I still went to church. I still did youth activities, but I didn't think about that part. **For a while I taught Sunday school during my active addiction. I also did a junior church where I would have second through sixth grade kids once a month while the adults were upstairs having their service. I'd have a service with the kids. A church member had asked me to teach Sunday school because I used to be a teacher, and I thought it would be for like five weeks. I would teach about the life of Peter, and it ended up being like a nine month study on the life of Peter.** So, we talk about compartmentalizing. I had this life over here then I have this life over here. When I was involved in the church life and the social life, I didn't think about this over here. I just didn't think about it. That's all part of the noise, I guess. But then, when it gets dark outside, and everyone goes to bed, then you think about this life. And you don't think about this other life over here. I kept them separate. So, the internet browsing and the masturbation got progressively worse before I started working for an employer. I never called in sick there because there was no reason to, the hours were very flexible. But at my other job I'd call in sick every now and then and I'd spend the whole day in front of my computer screen.

I: Browsing pornography?

S: Yeah, exactly. Then the world came tumbling down when I lost my job because I was downloading pornography at work on a daily basis. Even then though, I came in to the human resources department knowing that I had done wrong, and I came up with a plan. I think back now, and I think, how stupid that was! So I told them, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to do this and this and this, can I keep my job? I look back now, and it's the same thing as a filter. You can do all those external things, and it's not going to make

a difference. I had to make changes internally. After three months that I was out of work, I got hired at the place where I am now employed. I started browsing the internet at home again. The last time when I got fired, I said, “You know what? I learned a lesson. I’m done. I can not do this anymore. I just lost a job because of it. I’m done.” That lasted about a week and a half because now I’m browsing the internet at home again. My wife caught me, and she looked at me and she said, “You get help, or you’re out of here, and you’ll never see your son again.”

I: She caught you browsing the internet for pornography at home?

S: Yeah, and she said, “You get help, or you’re out of here, and you’ll never see your son again.” Okay, so the very next day, I get to work and I look up “sex addiction,” and I start looking at SA, SAA, SLAA, all of the other AA whatevers. On Tuesday, I e-mailed and I said I need help. I explained a little bit about what is going on. Wednesday, I got a reply that there’s a meeting Thursday, and I went to the meeting Thursday. That was in May of 2006.

I: How are things now?

S: Better. Much better.

I: How are things with your wife now?

S: Better. We’re still in marriage counseling, but better than they were three years ago.

I: In your active addiction , was the primary issue between you and your wife that you were not getting enough sex, or were there other issues?

S: Yes, that was one issue, but that was a secondary issue. The reason why it doesn’t happen is because there’s a lack of trust. There’s the lack of being a man, of standing an making decisions, being confident.

I: Are you saying that you were not being a man, making decisions or were not confident?

S: Correct. Those are still the issues that we are currently working on. I'm a follower and I allow others to be emotional barometers, and the lack of trust. My wife does not feel like she can be vulnerable with me for fear of being hurt because she's afraid of another let down. Those are the things that we are addressing now in our therapy. The primary issue was always that I wasn't a leader in the family.

S: I was an addict. I was an addict, and that's the problem.

I: That was the primary stress in your marriage?

S: Yes, I think so. So, I take responsibility, but she says she has some responsibility in this as well. She allowed it for so long, this and that. **This problem went on for years. Perhaps if she had drawn better boundaries, it may not have gotten as big as it did. As far as her self-esteem issues, if she had done some work with a counselor to address those issues instead of waiting 17 years into our marriage. For some of those things, she says she has to accept some responsibility.** I did a lot to wreck it though.

I: Since your wife did not share your evangelical faith, was there any expectation for you to be the head of the house or anything like that?

S: Oh yes, absolutely. Yes there was. But I didn't do that because I was a sex addict. That's when I look back at my dad and how non-involved he was and how into pornography he was, and he just existed in the house, and I think that's what I was doing.

I: But your wife expected you to be the head of the house?

S: Yes, the head of the house.

I: Was that from her Catholic upbringing?

S: I think that's just from her being traditional. We're very traditional. I don't know if that has anything to do with religion or not. She would plan everything, and I didn't plan anything.

I: That was problematic for her?

S: Very. I was a follower and not a leader. That was a big issue. She wanted a man, and I was not a man. **Now I'm making sure I lead the family in prayers at dinner time. My son and I always talk about God and Jesus, and I try to always talk about those things when my wife is present. I attempt to pray with her at night and to do devotions with her. I don't know if it's reluctance, but she's uncomfortable with it, but I've initiated those things, to do the devotions with her and to talk about spiritual things.**

I: Do you think that religion has had any impact on your views about sexuality?

S: I don't know. It's hard for me to separate my going to SA and my faith. I incorporate my faith with my fellowship at Sexaholics Anonymous. I was saved a long time ago. I believe that being saved is about a relationship with my God and my savior, and at the time, I thought I had that. But it wasn't until coming to SA, that I realized that I don't really think I had a relationship with my God. It was my sexaholism that enabled me to better my relationship with God. Before coming to SA, I don't think my faith had any impact on my sexuality at all. Had it had an impact, I wouldn't have done half the things that I had done. There are so many sexual addicts that are evangelical Christians, even pastors, 60% perhaps? Even your average Joe sitting in a pew, there's like a 70% chance that he's viewed pornography in a week. I do remember, I used to pump gas in the summer in [city] and all these pretty girls are everywhere, and I knew what I was doing

was wrong, and I thought the answer would be – well, let me talk to one of my elders at church.

I: What were you doing that was wrong?

S: Lusting after any girl I'd see. This was before I was married. I was 25. I knew that this was a problem. I had started going to church there. I was becoming very active, but I still had this problem with lust. I thought, I have to deal with this. I'm going to get married next year. This is a problem. So, I remember going to my pastor, well, one of the elders, and he was like this 75 year old man. So I told him what my problem was – I see a pretty girl, I got to look. It's lust. I see a pretty girl, and I got to look. I got to look. What do I do? What is the answer? He looked at me and said, "Son, I'm 75 years old and I still have that problem, and I thought, I'm a dead duck. All you got to do it you got to pray more. You got to read your Bible more." I did. I prayed more. I read my Bible more, and it didn't seem to work. It wasn't helpful at all, not for me.

I: Was that the only time that you asked for help?

S: Yep. That was the only time. When I found out it wasn't working, I learned to separate them – not to think about it. I thought, I must be doing something wrong or I can't fix this problem. I prayed. I can't tell you how much I prayed. I read the Bible every night. I joined a men's accountability group, and we would meet Tuesday mornings at six o'clock in the morning before work. None of that worked. I was still lusting.

I: What did you pray about?

S: My prayer at the time was, "God, take this away. God, take this away. God, take this away." And He never did. "Take this lust away. Take this lust away." He never did. That was my prayer, "Take this away." And I've come to realize that there's a reason that He

didn't take it away. I've even said that God doesn't cause bad things to happen. He allows things to happen in our lives for a reason – to draw us closer to Him. For some it's the death of a spouse or a tragic car accident, that you go so low that you have nowhere to turn but to Him. For me, he allowed an addiction, and it's because I have this addiction and He didn't take it away that I get up every morning and do my morning meditations. I have my phone set for 12:12 because I live by the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. My phone alarm goes off at 12:12, and I turn the lights off in my office, and I turn the computer screen off. I tell the secretary to hold the calls, and for ten minutes, I just sit and I pray. Before I go to bed at night, I do a nightly reading, and it's because of my addiction that I actually have grown much closer to my God. So in a lot of ways, I feel that I'm blessed I have this addiction because had it not been for this, I wouldn't have had the relationship with my God that I do now.

I: Whenever you prayed to God to take it away and he never did, was there any feeling that you had about that?

S: I wasn't one of those angry Christians where I blame God for this. I wasn't angry about it. I didn't blame Him. I just thought, well, you know what? I won't think about it. I just won't think about it. I'll continue to go to church on Sundays. I'll go through the motions.

I: So you separated that?

S: Big time.

I: But you always went to church every Sunday?

S: Absolutely. Whenever I was in church, I would pray, "God, please forgive me that I viewed pornography this week. Please forgive me that I lusted, and please forgive me

this,” and so I was always washed clean of it. Every Sunday, I was washed clean, and in the back of my mind, I was thinking, I know I’m going to pray this next week.

I: So, through the week, it would bother you like it did initially because you had decided to separate from it?

S: Yeah, I wouldn’t think about it, and I think that’s why – because I didn’t think about it, I think that’s what God wants me to do now, is to think about it. And when I think about it, that’s when I have to rely on Him. It’s a couple of times a day that I pray because I do think about it now. So my faith has grown stronger because of my addiction. I went to the SA international conference last year, and once I got back, I started saving again to go this year.

I: What are your views on homosexuality and sexual addiction?

S3: It’s lust, that’s all. My sponsor struggles with homosexual urges. He’s a grandfather. He’s been married for 40 years. He talks about anonymous sex with men. My drug of choice is pornography and masturbation. Somebody else, they may have fetishes. Somebody else struggles with homosexual thoughts. How it manifests itself, it doesn’t matter because it’s all the same thing. It’s all lust.

I: Do you not think that homosexuality can be a part of a healthy sexual relationship?

S3: Correct. That’s what we believe at SA. The people in SA should not be in homosexual relationships. It’s the same as a single man. He shouldn’t be in a sexual relationship with a woman if he’s not married to her.

I: What if gay people were married?

S3: No, I believe that marriage is between a man and a woman. My opinion was formed way before going to SA. Marriage is between man and a woman. You can call it a union,

don't call it marriage. I just don't think that's what God intended. It's a sin in the same way that adultery is a sin. I don't believe there are levels of sin. I don't think one sin is any worse than another. A sin is just a sin.

S4 Edited Synthesis

I: Can you discuss the nature of your sexual addiction?

S4: For me, I now identify as a sex addict for as long as I identify as a born-again Christian because formative things happened to me at about the same time. I was 9 years old when, in church, I accepted Christ as my savior, but it was also about that time that I also found a Playboy magazine at my grandfather's house. I used to spend weekends with my grandparents because my parents were divorced. From that moment, as I look back, I realize now that I was hooked. I was hooked on those images of women that gave me a sense of the unconditional love that I so desperately desired, and there was the trigger for further addiction. I say that now after a lot of reading, a lot of research, experience, five years of recovery, and looking back at my childhood, which was essentially a young fellow under the age of ten who grew up in a family where my parents hated each other. They were just never meant to be with each other. They just were at war. While I know that my mother loved me desperately and my father cared for me, they certainly did not care for each other and our life from my earliest memories was just devastation. There was always upheaval. They never physically hurt each other that I can recall, but it was just constant yelling, demeaning, anger, and it was just an awful situation for a young kid under the age of ten to grow up where I felt, as I look back now when I look at my SA book, the root of the problem was that I felt inadequate, unworthy, alone, and afraid, and those key emotions were feelings that, when I found that magazine, really played into that. Because I wanted to be adequate. I wanted to be worthy. I wanted to be together. I wanted to be loved. I didn't want to be afraid. I wanted to be secure, and so when I found those magazines, it gave me that sense of security that I just tapped into. It was a very

difficult childhood where I was desperately seeking love, care, and affection. At the same time, because of my family situation, I believed that I was inadequate and that I was alone because I felt as if I was the only one in the world who was experiencing this hell in my home and this feeling of being not unloved, but just allowed to live in this situation that was just terrible. This awful personal sense of just awfulness, and we all lived in it, my sister too who has her own problems that she's dealing with and has in her lifetime, which includes some drug dependency. I felt as if I was the only one experiencing this, so I felt unworthy. I thought that everyone else had the perfect home, perfect parents, perfect siblings, white picket fence, the whole image of perfectness that everyone else experienced but me so that drove me inward so I connected with this image. It was to me, the way I could cope.

I: Did you think you were disconnected from your parents or you didn't get the attention you needed?

S4: That was part of it. We weren't wealthy, and after my mom and dad divorced, it was even worse because I went with my mother and my sister went with my father. My mother had to work, and she did a magnificent job and did everything she could to sacrifice for me, but she was a product of a difficult circumstance in her life too.

I: She was working a lot?

S4: Yeah.

I: Were you kind of like a latch key child?

S4: I would say that, yeah. I would say that, for sure.

I: After your parents divorced, did you still talk to your dad?

S4: It's only within the last month or so that I really started to connect with him. I haven't talked to my dad yet, but I started to connect with him where I hope to visit with him and share a cup of coffee with him after 40 years. I haven't seen him since I was probably ten or eleven, so it's been a complete separation. It was a terrible break-up between my mom and my dad, and out of respect for my mom who sacrificed everything, I didn't want a relationship with my dad. And frankly, my dad did some things back then to try to make my mother look like a bad mother, and through the custody proceeding, I had a hard time forgiving him over it, even as a little kid seeing this – sort of being the pawn being dragged through the court system. I had a hard time forgiving him for what he was tried to do when she was the only one who was trying to help me. He only wanted me out of spite for her. He wanted both of us to spite my mother, and the court said, no. My sister was older and they gave her the choice to go with my dad, and that was a mistake for her, unfortunately. But now, I just started to reconnect and only through God's love am I able to think about that. So, my family situation, at the age of nine or ten, after that court system process, I went with my mom, my sister went with my dad. Basically it was just my mom and me, and she was out working and was trying to make ends meet, and I was a kid who had a lot of time on my own at home waiting for her to come home after work. I spent weekends with my grandparents, but I felt inadequate, unworthy, alone, and afraid. At the same time, I know from being with my grandmother and being in church, and I knew and always have known that God loves me, that I'm saved, that He has a plan for me, that He's there, and that I can rely on Him, but at the same time I struggled with these feelings of inadequacy and the lack of unconditional love and acceptance and safety that I as a young person really felt, and that safety really came to me through the pursuit

of these pornographic images, which then I would use to masturbate and to give that sense of relief which helped me to cope with what was a very difficult situation. At the same time, as a young kid, even in the early stages of this, I can remember feeling this overall sense of remorse and guilt over the acting out simply because I knew I was doing this for a reason other than what would be called normal, if there is a normal. I didn't identify it as wrong, but on the other hand, I knew it was secretive. I identified it as something that was secretive that only I did and that only I knew. Maybe in that lack of truth to admit to others, maybe I thought that that part of it was wrong. I felt inadequate and unloved and fearful, and I was doing this as a way to cope rather than going to others and say, "Look, how can I get help?" or "Help me understand this," or "Why do I feel like I want to do this?" or "Look what I found. Look what I did." I never disclosed it. Even in my day, I had tough time with kids. There was a lot of name calling. I was a fat little dumpy kid who had gray teeth because of tetracycline that I got when I was two years old that discolored my teeth, so people would make fun of me because of the way I looked. And all those things came back and really focus in on how inadequate I am because everyone says so. Not only do I feel that way, but now everybody says so with all the mean things that they say. So that was hard just in grade school let alone when you get a little older with high school, and dating, and college, and life, then post-graduate work, and marriage, children – you always think it's going to get better, but I never reached a point where I felt, "Okay, cool, everything is good now." It's not. It's tougher. It's harder because now you have people that you're responsible for, you got a marriage to deal with. When I feel like I'm inadequate about how to deal with myself in the process of a lot of these thing along with things from her family. So here we are, two

inadequate, not well adjusted people coming together to create a marriage. The pressure builds, and it just got tougher and became more and more difficult. Basically, what my life was from that point was a greater pursuit for pornography. **Certainly, I used it to relieve stress, by all means because of the difficulty in my marriage, a home, a family, finances, young children, life's emotional issues. After my second daughter was born, my wife experienced a deep bout of post-partum depression. It was very difficult in our marriage, and I understand it so I didn't treat her very well because I didn't understand it, and that created much more stress for me as someone who was trying to keep it all together with the four year old, the baby, a wife, my mother trying to help out and my mom and my wife didn't necessarily always get along, so I dove into pornography for relief.** For so many years, you could only get it through magazines because computers didn't exist. None of this stuff we know today existed, so I would try to find these magazines anywhere I could. I would secretively go into stores when I was a little bit older, and I would buy magazines and hide them.

I: Like in high school?

S4: Yeah, yeah, in high school and then even later on in life. I can think of situations in my home when my wife was away, I drive to a little thrift store or whatever and I would buy these magazines in a place where nobody knew me. We would visit my wife's parents and I'd go out and tell her I was just going to run a couple of errands, and I'd go into one of these shops and I'd buy magazines, and I would just hide them to use them. It was constantly like that. I was just constantly trying to find these images so that I could use them to act out and it got to be progressively more frequent. What changed a lot for me and when I really started to fall off the cliff was a job that I took in 1997 where I

started to travel more and I travelled more frequently. That's really time too when the internet started to balloon. With a computer, a hotel room, and a phone line, I had access to anything I wanted and I didn't have to pay for it. My addiction has always been with pornographic images of women. It never really took any other kind of turn. It was never anything with kids or children or with men, never, ever. So, the images that I wanted to see were there. There's other people that I talk to – I never spent anything. I know people that spent thousands of dollars on phone lines, prostitution, strip places, or whatever. I never did that and never had to. So the opportunity was there, and my patterns would change as well with my wife, like, "Hey honey, I got to stay. I have to work late tonight," and I'd stay up and I'd be on the internet. Or I'd have to get up in the morning early and tell her, "I just have to do some more work before I go to work," and that sort of thing, and I'd be on the internet. Of course, when I was away, I'd have free access to it pretty much, and it just progressively got more like that. I'd wake up in the morning and think, "When can I find my opportunity where I can have that kind of alone time where I can connect online." In the natural course of addiction, the level I attained was never enough, and I just wanted something more. Where that happened was again through the internet where you could create this confidential identity where no one knows who you are, and you can go out and be this person that you want to be without anybody knowing who you are to interact in chat rooms and all sorts of things like that, to talk sexually to seek sexual contact, seek sexual partners. The pornographic images just started not to be enough, and so I started to go out and to look for women, and I did that through engaging in the romance chat rooms where you could find a group for any interest that you have, and I did. I would talk online with literally hundreds of women across the country, which

resulted in dozens of cybersex relationships, talking sexually with each other until we each reached climax through masturbation. I don't know how many people there were – lots. So the next step from there was the cybersex relationships and getting closer to certain people, and it was sort of like a whittling down process where with some of the women I met online graduated to phone sex relationships with these women. It was all consensual because they wanted to do it too, and I would call them when I was on the road, primarily, and we'd engage in phone sex relationships, with dozens of women. From there it progressed to a long-term adulterous affair that I had with a woman for over five years that I met initially on the chat line. I know it sounds funny, but as I look back on it now, I think that this is God's will – to demonstrate this to me that this was not His will for me. But this woman that I met and actually had an affair with, the similarities that we shared in common were uncanny. It was really uncanny, but for the fact that we met this way. It could be someone that – I really, truly believe that I could have spent my life with. It was that kind of person I met that was like no one else I ever met, but, on the other hand, I realize that if this did not happen through that path, I probably would have never met her. And even if all these things were true, still, the way this happened made it a falsehood, made it a fantasy. It was not based in truth. It was not based on God's plan for me. It was really an uncanny thing where God says to me today, "Sure. You may think that, that that's perfect, but My perfect will for you is to not run away from the commitment that you made to your wife and to your children to this fantasy that you have in your mind but to face the situation that you have today and to look to Me first to help you with your marriage and with your relationship with your kids and to seek recovery, restoration, and reconciliation through Me rather than off on your own with you on the

thrown of your life following your plan as opposed to what I know you need through My will that I have for you.” I look back at this now, and there are a lot of things I experienced, and I would never want anybody to experience that. I would never want anybody to experience the hurt that I feel I’ve dealt with all of my life and struggled with, but, on the other hand, I can sit here now and say that I know that this was God’s plan for me because He knew that this had to happen to me for me to say, “Okay Lord, I give up. I can’t do it. I just simply cannot control everything. I cannot fix my marriage. I cannot fix all of the things that I’ve done wrong. I’ve got to turn to You. I’ve got to rely on You for everything that I do.” That is not something that is instant and life-changing, but it’s the nature of the process with daily reliance on God. It’s why we say “one day at a time” because it’s true. It actually means something. That’s why we talk about the serenity prayer because it starts with God and our relationship with God. It’s about giving Him things that we can’t control even though we try to control it, we realize that we can’t control it so we give it to Him. It’s depending on Him to face the things that are ugly, that are painful, that are things that we caused and to choose His choices and not our choices. And that’s all about my daily walk with the Lord and the daily reliance that I have to have on Him whether I’m dealing with sexual temptation or problems with my relationship. There’s been times this past week where I can’t stand my wife. I mean, she always has a comment about something she doesn’t know about, and I just want to say, “What are you talking about? You don’t know anything.” But if I look through my eyes at her that way then I’m going to feel anger. I’m going to feel frustration. I’m going to want to leave. But if I look at her through God, I can deal with that. So it’s about life, it’s about relationships, it’s about dealing with work problems, it’s about dealing with kids,

it's about dealing with what I can deal with that God gives me the opportunity to do to have the courage to deal with. If there's something I can't deal with, I say it's part of God's will because I can't do anything. I can't affect it, so I have to be comfortable with that and know that these things are in God's hands. We talk about SA and other programs, but it's so much more than that. It's a scriptural blueprint on the daily reliance we have to have on our Lord Jesus Christ. That's what it is, and it's taken me 50 years to learn that, but that was part of God's will.

I: Okay, great summary. Could I rewind you back to high school and when you used magazines and then we could go through that timeline? I think where you left off was when you started buying magazines in your teenage years.

S4: Yes, and that was something that continued with me through my teenage years into my first job because, again, the internet wasn't around through the 70s and the 80s, and even through the early 90s. **I would use anything that was available via television, HBO, Cinemax, that sort of thing. Any movies on the movie channels, but most of my access was through magazines. It was really 96 or 97, with my work, I started to travel more and get connected by way of computers and the internet. That was when the internet really started to take off.**

I: Were you hiding the fact that you were buying the magazines?

S4: Oh yeah. I never disclosed any of that. That was always hidden.

I: How did you feel about buying the magazines? Did your faith have any role in this process?

S4: Oh yeah. I knew it was wrong, and I knew that it was actual sin. I knew that. That was the dichotomy of my life because I have always known the truth even from an early

age – the scriptural truth and a salvation-believing background foundation in the Lord Jesus Christ, so I’ve always had that. In fact, that’s the person that everyone knew. They knew me as the perfect husband, father, student, and later in life worship-leader, elder. People thought, “What a great guy,” and I had all of this hidden, so just that dichotomy and to maintain that façade created for me so much stress and anxiety while trying to cover up the magazines and internet usage and the affairs. I would cover up the lies and the travel etcetera that I would do. It was just tremendous to maintain. **I was very, very involved in the church, and I always have been, really. I look back and it’s a very curious duality to me. I feel like I’ve been an addict for as long as I’ve been a born-again Christian. I know that I accepted the Lord as my savior when I was between nine or ten years old, and that’s when I was spending a lot of time at my grandparent’s house and was triggered by my grandfather’s magazines. But in the case of knowing the right road but following a different one. I have always wanted to be the person that follows the right road that is an exemplary person and an exemplary Christian, but at the same time, I’ve been addicted to pornography. Nobody knew me anything other than a perfect guy, a good Christian, a good father and dad, and someone who professed and believed in the Lord as my savior. But I had this hidden sin. I harbored it and kept it secret for all of my life.**

I: Was that why you were so involved in the church?

S4: Yeah, it’s what I wanted to be. The person that I was on the outside was the person I always wanted to be, but for the fact that I was a person that was a slave to sexual sin. So, the person I wanted to be was the person I was on the outside, but I was a slave to sin in my private, hidden life. But from an early age in the high school

years, my pursuit was all the things that a kid typically does, whether through sport or music or school – I wanted to be connected to a relationship and I wanted to have sex. I had the magazines, so I wanted to experience sex. As it turned out, I think I was a junior in high school when I started to date this one girl, and she was willing so we started to engage in sex as teenagers. Not that we had that many opportunities, but every opportunity that we could get, we tried. So, I was with her and we engaged in sex and a relationship for a number of years until my first year of college where she desired to be with someone that wasn't away, so she looked for someone else, and we broke up, and that just devastated me to lose my high-school sweetheart. So, we'd always look for opportunities to engage in sex and other kinds of touching activities and things like that. Whether we did it in her home downstairs in the game room – we were both in the choir, and we'd do it in the robe room, which was a room down in the basement where they kept the choir robes. I was the choir president, so I had a key to the robe room and we'd go use the robe room. But it was just this constant pursuit, this constant pursuit of what I wanted to experience. And while I wanted more and more of it, I felt bad. I thought, if we got caught, this would be terrible. I know this isn't right. I know that my beliefs say that I shouldn't be doing this, and I've already lost my virginity, and I'm not supposed to do that until I get married. It was the constant nature of wanting it badly and pursuing it and, at the same time, that momentary relief and pleasure which then gives way to more guilt and remorse. I've likened it to an ongoing downward spiral in terms of how I feel and continuing to drag myself down, but the only way to deal with the downward spiral was to do more of it to help cope on a momentary basis but then it just continues to deepen things. **I would seek to act out for relief, pleasure, for that high, that hit, but after the**

momentary release, it would just be crushing remorseful guilt of my Christian beliefs, but also in terms of my own intellectual understand that this is not regular behavior. The feeling would be, I'm not a good Christian, I'm not a good person, I'm a liar, abnormal, I've got a messed up life. And that was really my pattern after that. Through college, I pursued other relationships and connected up with another lady that I had a college relationship with for two and a half years where we engaged in sex frequently because we had the opportunity, whether in our dorm rooms or our apartments once we moved out of the dorms, but then even that wasn't enough **because I was pursuing sex with other women in college, the masturbation and pornography continued with that. I had pornographic magazines in my apartment regularly because I had the time alone where I could do what I wanted. I was alone with no accountability to anybody. It was constant. The more I had sex with women, the more I wanted it and the more it would lead to further desire to act out.** She graduated a year ahead of me, and we were still connecting because I never wanted to lose those connections because I felt like sex was an outlet. **It was another avenue for me to pursue. Any type of sexual activity that I had engaged in, I did not want to lose that outlet whether it was pornography, magazines, or women. Any sexual connection I had with a woman, I wanted to maintain at any cost whether I would lie or propose marriage, anything to keep that. Even with the affair I had, I would say, "Yes, I'm going to divorce my wife," anything to keep that outlet, I would do.** I never wanted to lose that, but at the same time, I started to pursue other girls in college as well. That was probably one of the first crises of conscience that I had as a senior where I started to have a relationship with another person while still having a relationship with

this girl that left. I pursued it because I wanted to have sexual relations with her, and I didn't tell her, so my cover-up and my lying already began then, and I can see the roots of it. At the time, with the person, I didn't feel bad about sex, but I felt bad about how I was doing it. I didn't tell anybody, and I knew that was my way of going about it – to handle the situation but to keep it secret. I knew that was trouble. It's the same kind of troubling behavior with all the other things I did in life, with the internet, with affairs, etc., they were all secret, and maintaining that lie, which is the same as not telling the truth, that's a lie too. It just continued to wear at me and, consequently, deepened the spiral. So in college, ultimately she broke up with me after I told her about this other girl. I should have broken up with the other girl too, but I was a senior, and I couldn't let her go. So, what did I do? I proposed to her. I proposed to the other girl too, come to think of it, because I wanted to hold on to this. I didn't want to lose this.

I: Did you propose to her because she was going to leave you?

S4: No, I actually proposed to her before I started to see the other girl. This was in the summer before my senior year when she was already graduated, and I didn't want to lose her, so I proposed to her. About the same time when I had come back to school, I had started to date this other girl, and once my crisis of conscience came about keeping both of them up in the air, I finally disclosed to the first girl, and she was obviously upset and we broke up. I then pursued the other girl in the same way I pursued the first girl because I didn't want to lose her either, so I proposed to her. When we graduated, we moved to [city], and we got jobs and were there for probably about six to eight months, but God never intended for us to be together. It was an awful relationship that was pretty close to what my mom and dad experienced. Finally, I had the good sense, even though we were

two months away from the wedding, to say, “This can’t happen. We just can’t do this. This just isn’t right.” So I broke up with her, but at the same time, I was still pursuing pornography. I was still acting out compulsively. I was still trying to find other women to fill that void. But, we broke up and I moved back to [city]. I started to go to law school, and in a couple of months, I actually met my soon to be wife who I knew from when we were together in college, but we had never connected when we were in college together. So, when I came back, I was not attached, and I was looking for someone else to have as a girlfriend where I could get sex, and because of her family background, she was looking for someone that would care for her because she never really had that in her life. So I professed these things like, I’m this great guy, and I want to be a good husband to you as we went through our courtship together over the three years of law school. So, I’m driving back and forth from school to her apartment. She had her own apartment, so we had free access whenever we wanted to get together to engage in sex. That’s kind of how we started our relationship, and we built a relationship that way. So then we got married. I proposed to her too, and when I graduated from law school, we got married. Even when I was courting her, I was even engaged at the time, I got really comfortable with this one secretary at a law firm I was working at downtown. We had a sexual encounter as well, so there was never anything in where I said, “Stop.” The stop sign was up there, but I just blew through the stop sign. I knew the stop sign was up there, but I just blew through the stop sign. Always because of my pursuit of wanting more.

I: What do you mean by the stop sign?

S4: I'm engaged! Or previously, because I was with someone else. I knew the right from wrong, but that never stopped me because my desire for the pursuit of that relationship, that sex, and that gratification was greater, so I just blew through the stop sign.

I: It sounds like you had a number of sexual relationships throughout this period. Did you feel guilty because of your faith?

S4: Oh yeah, absolutely because I knew that I was not acting like a good Christian, and I knew that I was not acting the way that God would want me to act.

I: How did you deal with that?

S4: More acting out to cope and to deal with the pain. A lot of people in my group call it "medicating." Basically sexually acting out just to have that kind of release to help deal with that pain and get that pleasure to deal with the pain of everything – whether it was because of feeling inadequate, unworthy, alone, and afraid, feeling ashamed because I wasn't acting the way my beliefs would have me to act, guilty for betraying people that put their trust in me, fearful and afraid because I had to maintain this lifestyle knowing who I was and who I am as a Christian and as an addict, as someone who says he's a Christian but still the hopeless addict. So consequently, dealing with that pain and hurt and struggle is what made it worse and one of the reasons that I sought more of it because I needed to seek more in order to cover more of the pain. And the more I acted out, the more guilty and remorseful I felt. The more that I engaged in sexual behavior and the more I had to cover up, it was just a downward spiral. I call it the downward spiral of death because this life of addiction for me, the only outcome is death. And for me it was death to relationships because all I cared about was me because I wanted that high to cope with my problems regardless of others. I didn't care about them. I cared about me.

Spiritual death – disconnection from God – I mean, I knew what God wanted me to do, but I didn't do it because I was on the throne. Just the emotional death to keep up this house of cards. The difficulty, the fear, the anxiety, the pressure, and ultimately, or potentially, physical death with the STDs and all sorts of things like that. Outside of the physical death, I experience death in all those forms as a result of my desire to cope with feelings in my life that go back to this boy of nine years old. Again, I look at that and say, "That's what God intended for me." God knew that these things had to happen to me for me to have a personal realization that I needed to turn my life and my will over to the care of God. I can't do this. I'm powerless, and God can if I let Him. That's really been my daily prayer. So, I broke it off with the secretary because I was getting married and she was taking another job. Then I told her I was getting married, and of course, she was angry and upset. None of it ever ended easily. I think it's been one of my problems in life because I've always wanted to please people. I never wanted to say "no" because I felt like, if I say "no" to you, you're going to feel bad, and I don't want you to feel bad, so I'll just say "yes" to you even though it may be wrong, may not be what you need to hear, may not be truthful. So I found myself wanting to please others, and that goes back to my personality – trying to be a peace-maker between my parents and wanting to be a good kid so I didn't cause anymore trouble that existed in our lives. I always wanted to please people, and when I got into these relationships, I didn't want to hurt people's feelings, but how could I not? I was only in it for me and I wasn't in it for them, so when things were disclosed, of course they were upset. So it always ended badly. So later my wife and I got married, and I continued to masturbate frequently to pornographic images in magazines, which were hidden.

I: After you got married, did your sexual behavior stop or lessen in any way?

S4: Between 1986 and 1997, all of my addiction was focused on pornographic images in magazines because the internet wasn't available, with one exception. I was on a big case with this team and I got really flirty with this one paralegal. It never resulted in sex, but that's because she had the good sense to see the stop sign. We had this case in [county], and I'd pick her up, and we'd drive back and forth. There were a couple of time that I was in her apartment, and I wanted sex. We kissed, but we never engaged in any kind of sexual conduct or anything like that because she had the good sense to stop it. She said, "You know, you need to go home to your pregnant wife." I was like, "Man, what am I doing? What am I doing?" But I never headed the stop sign, so the rest of that time through 1997, it was the magazine addiction, pretty much, pornographic images and masturbation.

I: How was your relationship with your wife?

S4: It was worsening. That's why in 1997, when I started to travel and had access to the internet and other women, my addiction really took off. Like I said, she came from a very difficult background, just like I did. She had a mother and father who were disconnected and terrible brothers who created a whole lot of hell in her life. She grew up an angry person because she had a father who didn't step in to fix things. So she grew up not knowing a loving relationship and the feeling that gave her the most comfort was anger and expressing anger because that made her feel better, to lash out. Basically, that what occurred in our marriage.

I: From the very beginning?

S4: Pretty much. She is very explosive, and she knows she still struggles with that but she asks God to help her with that. She's identified it and knows it. She's a born-again Christian too. But it was tough. I mean, I wasn't really interested in her. I was, but I wanted what I wanted first, and if that happened to tie in with what she wanted then fine, but if not then I didn't care because I wanted to masturbate and pursue my addiction however I wanted and to hide it. Marriage and then one daughter and then another daughter, it just got harder and harder. So our relationship was really on pretty thin ice to begin with because we both had emotional problems that we brought with us from our childhood that made us not good, strong, confident stable adults. We were both prone to tempers, to outbursts, and kind of irrational behavior, angry behavior.

I: Was your use of masturbation and pornography also a way to escape just like whenever you were a child?

S4: Absolutely. And it only got worse, and to me it created the lie for me why it would be okay for me to leave my wife and children to be with this other woman that I was having this affair with. Because look, this marriage is done, it's over, it's been dead for so long. You don't meet my needs. I don't meet your needs. None of us is happy. I just want to be happy. Don't worry, the kids will be fine. They'll grow up. They'll be fine. You'll remarry, don't worry, blah, blah, blah. So that's what I told myself. I made the path of escape which I really tried to do. I really wanted to get away from them and just turn my back on them, like I did with everybody else – all the other people I committed to, I turned my back on them to pursue something else.

I: Did your path of escape really culminate when you met this woman that you had the affair with for five years?

S4: Yeah.

I: And prior to that, you would just escape from your problems with masturbation and pornography?

S4: Yeah, it was an escape before, but here I really wanted to escape my marriage, my responsibilities, my relationship with my kids, and my life. I wanted to escape everything, and I tried. It was about 2003 and my one daughter was 13 and my other daughter was about 9 at the time, and I announced to my wife one day out of the blue. She didn't know anything about my addiction at that time or the affairs I had.

I: She didn't know about you going on to pornography sites or anything else you did?

S4: No. She didn't know about any of this at all. That came a few months later. So I told her, "Look, I'm done. I'm over it. This marriage is dead." Something had happened that triggered it. We had a bad time, the kids were there, and it was just awful, and I just announced to her, "I'm leaving. I can't put up with this. I just can't." And she didn't know anything about the other woman either. This was all sort of pretext.

I: Were you going to church at the time?

S4: We were. Although I stopped going to church while she was continuing to go at our church when I announced that I was leaving. Prior to that, nobody knew anything. It was the perfect family. But my pretext was for me to leave her so I could be with this other women – so I can marry this woman. I would get divorced and marry this woman. God had a plan there that really drew me back. That was through the life of a testimony of a guy that was in my church who saw all this taking place, and he reached out to me and said, "We need to get together." I knew him for a long time. We did things together. We knew each other and our families, etc. We went to the same church. He said, "There's a

lot of things that I see going on in you that I saw in myself.”

I: Just by observing you, he saw something?

S4: Yeah. Well, he was a sex addict and struggled with many of the same things and had much of the same path that I had. Of course, I didn’t want to admit that at the time. Well, my masturbation, I mean, that’s just normal. I never wanted to admit that it was a compulsive and addictive problem, and he said, “Yeah, it is, and you need to get help.” I disclosed to him things that I had never disclosed to my wife.

I: After he approached you?

S4: Yeah.

I: What did he see going on with you? Because you said you had never disclosed anything about your behavior, so how did he know that something was going on with you?

S4: Well one, he saw the estrangement between my wife and me. He came to me at the same time as his wife came to my wife, and she basically disclosed to my wife the struggles they had in their condition and my wife started to ask questions – Are you seeing anybody? Do you have any pornography? Stuff like that, and it was harder and harder and harder to lie.

I: She started asking you questions?

S4: Yes, yes. So then I broke down and admitted to my life of pornography, and I admitted this affair, but at the same time I still said, “I’m not going home.” At this time, I had moved out. I was at a hotel for two or three months. So I said, “I’m not coming back. Our marriage is over. I’ll admit these things to you so you can have more of the details,” because she had this constant desire to know why this happened – You can’t just drop this on me and not tell me why this happened. So, I started to disclose to her some of the

details about my addiction even though I wasn't going into a whole lot of the detail of the affair – because I was trying to hold on to it. Just like I was doing everything else, I was trying to hold on to it. I finally go to a point through marriage counseling, even though I was living out of the house, and through my friend who approached me initially, I started to go to SA groups, but I still wasn't convinced that I was an addict.

I: Was your counselor a Christian counselor?

S4: Yes. So, my wife and I started to see the marriage counselor, and I started to go to SA meetings with my friend, and at this point, we had made arrangements for me to come home. After living away for two to three months, I came home even though, at the same time, I was keeping this affair going. My wife knew about the affair, but she thought that it was over. So, I still tried to maintain that link because I didn't want to lose that link for my behavior, my acting out, my outlet. So even while I was home, I couldn't say "no." I couldn't tell this woman "no." I tried, but I still came back into it. I blew past the stop sign again. I would continue to cheat on my wife even while I was home, even after I left and came back home. Whether I would go to the airport and meet her, or I'd say, "Hey, I got an early flight in the morning, so I'm just going to stay at the airport hotel," and she'd meet me at the airport hotel.

I: And you were going to SA and to marriage counseling at this same time?

S4: Yeah.

I: So, I'm assuming you did not tell your counselor about the affair that was going on?

S4: Exactly. Well, he knew about it, but he didn't know I was continuing it. He thought I was back home and everything was over. So again, the clandestine meetings with this woman – my profession to her that I was going to ultimately leave my wife, and she

would say, “When are you going to leave?” It was just the constant pressure that I made worse because I couldn’t say “no.” It’s all coming back to me – I tried to leave my wife again. I said, “Look, I’m still thinking about this woman.” I was trying to find a way out, and, “I haven’t resolved this, and I feel like I still have feelings for her.” So my wife said, “Well, you have to leave.” So I left again, and I went to another hotel, but then I reached out to my friend and we talked about his, and he said, “You have to stop. If you have any hope of any recovery or restoration, you have got to just say no to this woman” – because I was supposed to meet her that weekend, so he said, “You have to tell her that you’re not going to be there and that you’ll never see her again. You’ve got to do that.” So, I did. I called her, and I left her a voicemail message. I said, “I can’t do this anymore. I just can’t. My life is a wreck. I’m out of my house again. I’m hurting. I hurt so many people, and I know I’ve hurt you, but I just can’t this, so I’m not going to be there.” Ironically, she’s a born-again Christian too – talk about some the irony here. So, I said, “I can’t do this. God doesn’t want me to do this. He doesn’t want you to do this. We have to find different paths.” Well, she was angry. I was away on a business trip when I called her and told her this in this message, and she actually sent me an e-mail message, and she said, “Fine. You want to do this? I’m going to call your wife and tell her all these things you’ve been doing that you haven’t told her.” So, I called my counselor and admitted all that to him, and he said, “You got to call your wife. She’s got to hear it from you,” and I knew that. But I just couldn’t believe it that I had been lying to my wife even after I came home again and said, “Everything is fine. Everything will be better now.” So, anyway, I did that – that was my rock bottom day. I called her and I told her this, and she was angry. She was preparing to have a party for my daughter – she was 14 that day, it was her birthday,

and I laid this on her because I was afraid that if I didn't, she was going to get this call. I was devastating, and it's been five long years of recovery since I moved out of the house, I got an apartment. I lived out of the house for six or seven months.

I: After you told your wife?

S4: Yeah, and finally she, through counseling and her commitment, she said, "Come on back." But it's still a difficult relationship. I betrayed her many times, and she questions my activities. She fears. She doesn't want it to happen again. She doesn't want to be made to feel a fool of. There are lots of things that have happened that she questions me. She doesn't believe me, even though I can say, "No, that's never happened," but what can I do? I can't change that, and the only reason she feels that way is because of what I did. So, all I can do is pray. I can pray for her and I can surrender these situations to God, not to run away but to face it. That's a daily thing. We had something as bizarre as where three weeks ago, she was doing the laundry and she found a pair of socks that she couldn't identify. She asked the kids whose socks these were, and they didn't know. So she came to me, accusatory, and she said, "Whose socks are these?" None of us could explain them. I had said, "I have never seen those socks before in my life. I don't wear them. They're not mine. I have never seen those socks before in my life. I have no idea where those socks came from." So, she said to me, "Well, how do I know that they're not from some woman you were with or some man that you were with?" So it just sort of took off for her where it was a very difficult thing for her to deal with and those were not my socks and we hadn't known how they got there. Ultimately, we figured out how they got there. We were visiting my brother-in-law. They were his socks, and as my kids were

cleaning up the room they got swept up with the laundry. So just something innocent like that, she can see as something that is really, really harmful.

I: So, she's still having a hard time with it.

S4: Yeah, but that's part of it – that this is going to be part of my life for the rest of my life, but that's okay because that's what God has for me and what God intends for me and what God wants to use in my life so that I can be closer to Him – to look to Him for strength and restoration, recovery, reconciliation, surrender. To say to Him, “Okay Lord. What you have for me is sufficient, and I'm okay with that.”

I: Did you ever ask God to take away your addiction?

S4: All the time. I was never mad at God though. I was mad at myself, and I'd ask God, “Help me God. Take this from me. Please make it so I don't feel this way so I don't want to pursue this,” but I did. It was my choice. God gives us a free will to choose what we want to, and that's what He needed to break down in me – to say, “I'll help you when you take yourself off the throne and turn to me.” I never blamed God. I always blamed myself.

I: So then you would continue to act out to make yourself feel better?

S4: Yep.

I: Was there any element in your marriage about being the spiritual leader or the head of the household?

S4: Oh yeah. How can you as the spiritual leader act this way? What kind of example are you. I mean, I certainly felt this way. I'm supposed to be the spiritual leader of the house. That's been an issue for my wife sometimes. When she would feel angry about what happened she would say, “How could you do this? You professed to be this spiritual leader, and how can I put my trust in you as a spiritual leader now? Even though I know

you've been in five years of recovery. You've been in groups. You speak to others in outreach efforts, but how do I know that you're not lying to me? How can I trust you as the head of the household?" And I struggle with that, and I say, "Well, I can't change how you feel, and I understand how you feel, and I know why you're angry and upset and why you may question this, but this is something that I have to turn to God about because I can't change how you feel. I can ask God to help you, and I do, but I know that I have to look to Him everyday for my strength and my sobriety, for my life, my relationship, for everything, and I hope that you will see and that God reveal that to you, and if He doesn't, that's okay. If you never believe me, I understand that, but I know that I can turn to God and that's where my trust needs to be instead of pursuing all these other things that I did before." I don't go to SA any longer. I went to SA for about two and a half years, and then I got more connected with a friend and an accountability group and I do that and continue counseling sessions. I have found that more helpful to me because those things are all Christian based. SA tries to be more nondenominational even though it's based on actual scripture, there's no question about that. I just find that I have more comfort and I have grown more in my Christian outreach groups rather than SA.

I: So Christian men's accountability groups and Christian individual counseling is what you are doing now?

S4: Yes, as well as speaking to others about this.

I: Do you pray everyday and read your Bible ever day.

S4: Yes, absolutely.

I: Did you ever seek help from the church in any way before you were confronted by your friend.

S4: No.

I: Did you ever think that marriage would solve any of your problems with sexual addiction?

S4: I don't know if I ever put two and two together at the time, that I'm a sex addict and marriage is going to solve things, but I did think that once I was married and I had a wife, and we have the freedom to engage in sex whenever we want, things will be better. But in the stuff of life, marriage is very difficult, and marriage is only a very small part of sex and even less so after marriage because of the stuff of life, but yeah, I thought I had an unrealistic expectation of what marriage is, of what my life should be, and whether that would satisfy my sexual needs, and it was just a lie and a myth that I was telling myself. In reality, life is not easy and marriage is hard, my desire for pornography increased because I used pornography to run away from them. The way I looked at sex was that "This is going to be great. This is going to be someone who will meet my needs whenever I want." I had an unrealistic expectation of what a true intimate relationship was all about. I didn't understand anything about what true intimacy was. I certainly didn't see it exemplified in my parents' relationship, and so I didn't see any example of what a true intimate relationship was between a husband and a wife who supported each other and that it had nothing really to do with sex. Only now am I beginning to understand that as I seek it through an intimate relationship with my wife that is not sexually-based. So I used to think that a relationship was primarily a sexual relationship and one that would satisfy my needs. Right after I got married, I think I was disappointed about sex because I felt like it wasn't ever enough. I know it was because of the stuff of

life, and I don't fault my wife for it. I fault me because I had this unrealistic expectation that it would be all sex all that time, and that's not realistic.

I: Did God ever speak to you about turning your life around?

S4: No, I wouldn't ever say that I felt like God spoke directly to me where I heard a voice, but I have a sense in my spirit about the need to change my life and turn my life and will over to God, the need to allow God to make choices in my life rather than me. Sure, I knew that all along. It was my choice to resist that even though I knew the truth, I chose to resist it.

I: What are your views on sexual addiction and homosexuality?

S4: I have been in a number of group sessions to know that, for many men, their sexual addiction does, whether it's exploration of or interaction in a homosexual way, my addiction was never that. I can have a judgmental line about things despite the fact, when you look at my behavior, it's like, how can you do say this when you do that? For instance, I have always felt very uncomfortable with the notion of homosexual activity. I would never ever engage in that and I never had. I would say, on one hand, "This is terrible! How could anybody do that?" But on the other hand, here I am, someone who's a sex addict who is addicted to pornography who's had adulterous affairs, etc. I've never engaged in that, but I know that men have sought that and did that as part of an addiction because the nature of the addiction is always to try to do something more, try to do something that's more exciting than what you've done before. For some men, that leads to homosexuality. For me, I would never go there. My addiction has always been on women, larger busted women as opposed to smaller busted women, and that's where I have

focused. The women that I had sexual relationships with were women of that type. That's where I was drawn.

I: Do you think that same-sex relationships can be healthy?

S4: I don't know if it's always part of an addiction. I mean, I feel somewhat of uncomfortable because sort of judgmental about a topic despite the fact that I've got an addiction. I think that same sex relationships are wrong. I do not think they are healthy, and I don't know exactly why people feel draw to it, whether they think it's sick or whatever, but I know what I did, I did by choice, and I think that homosexuality is a choice too that I have never made.

I: Can you discuss the nature of your sexual addiction?

S5: Basically it started and it came to a head with me and my sexual addiction, not during my first marriage. My first marriage ended in divorce. During that time, there was a problem with pornography. There were problems with adult book stores, things like that, but nothing that really involved any uncomfortable feeling between my wife and myself. I mean, it was strictly mine. It was my problem. I was trying to deal with it myself, not trying to get any help from anybody. I felt like I could handle it. At that time, I had become a Christian and I was understanding that this was a sinful thing, but yet it didn't seem to bother me in that respect. It didn't seem like I was hurting anybody. The divorce – what happened was that she found out that I was doing some of this stuff indirectly. I don't know exactly how, but she found out about it, and we got a divorce. The home that we were living in belonged to my parents. I think she felt that she was going to get it, but she didn't. She didn't end up in the good portion of the divorce. I then went to *Parents without Partners* and finally found the woman I'm married to now. The addiction was still there, unfortunately, and my present wife found evidence of it with *Playboy* and with magazines. She confronted me about it, and it was basically, "Okay. I'll put it away or throw it away," and I got rid of it, but it didn't go away. I then actually started going to adult book stores, and I got into an accident as a result of being at an adult bookstore. I left there, and I got into a traffic accident. My wife confronted me with it and she said, "You have to do something about this. You either have to do it, or you're out." I didn't want to destroy this marriage like I had the other one, so I basically started looking at how I was going to go about doing this. There's a book out called *Every man's battle*,

and there was a group at my current church. I started getting into that group, and through that group, I started counseling. My counselor saw something in me and thought that it would be more effective for me to join another type of group. He recommended Sexaholics Anonymous, and he recommended it very strongly. I went to my first meeting, and my eyes were basically opened. I realized that at that meeting, I had a chance to tell my story to a group of guys where it stayed in the room and that was it. The confidentiality was there, and I never realized that there was such a group like that. That group has helped me out tremendously. As of right now I have one year, five months, and about thirteen or fourteen days of sobriety, and in that group, that's pretty good. A lot of the things that I have found out about all this is that I grew up in a family atmosphere where my mother and father were very staunch Christians and they never talked to me about sex, ever. I don't know whether my mother talked to my sister about it, but my father never talked about it to me. To my knowledge, my parents never slept together. They were in single beds. I could never understand that with my parents. That was strange for me. **It was something that they were brought up to do as children that they carried over to their adulthood, but it just struck me as something that was unusual for a married couple, even as a child.** I had a good relationship with my parents though. My mom was very loving and down to earth, and she didn't always approve of what I did, but she never said anything. She never said she disapproved of anything I did. If there was a disapproval, it was really subtle. If I did something wrong with my father, he told me about it. The one thing my father taught me was a lot of respect. The one time that I learned the basic respect from him was when I was a teenager and I was upstairs and I was watching television. My dad called up from the bottom of

the steps and said, “You need to come back downstairs and do your homework,” and I swore at him. That’s the first and last time I ever swore at my father. He took me downstairs, took his belt off, and gave me a good couple of licks. From that day on, I never swore at that man again. I respected that man to his dying day, even when he couldn’t familiarize himself with me because he had dementia. I went down to see him in [state], and he would remember me and associate with me as I was growing up, when I was younger. I could always remember the respect that man had for people. My mother didn’t like my first wife because her mother had been divorced and she was really social, ending up in a country club where she’d socialize. She thought she was important, anyway. My mother never liked my wife because she wasn’t the proper girl, and my mother was very proper. If my mother had dirt on her hands or something like that, she’d be very upset. She was a school teacher and was very involved with that. She was very intelligent. My father was an engineer and very well liked.

I: Did you have a good relationship with you parents as a child?

S5: Yes, I did. I had a better relationship with my father than my mother. **I wasn’t as close to my mother and more so to my father. My father was more understanding about me and anything I was going through. If I wanted to talk about anything, he would be one of the first people I would go to.**

I: Did you feel like you couldn’t go to your mom?

S5: Yeah, basically that’s true. Just because of the style of who she was. She was very prim and proper, and I don’t really know if she ever wanted to talk about things to me. She never really presented to me that she wanted to talk about stuff.

I: Did that bother you as a child?

S5: Somewhat. It affected me in getting close to women and dating later on. I wasn't as active in dating. I didn't get the really pretty girls or the most popular girl – yeah, I think it did. I attribute it to my relationship with my mother because it affected the way I interacted with girls. My mother didn't always approve of what I did. I didn't get into a lot of trouble, but things that I did, she wouldn't approve, but she never said too much and that's why I never got too much guidance from her. If my father said something, it was different. One time, with my second wife, he came over to the house and he had twenty dollars to give me, and he was going to give it to me, but then he turned to my wife and said, "Here. You know how to manage this better than he does." He trusted her. He was a good judge of people, very good judge of people. That was his asset. I'd like to be like him, but I'm not quite, I don't have that aptitude. I'm more of a mix of my mom and dad. In respect to sex, I was very curious about it, very curious about the feminine body and what the differences were with sex and all that, but I was never told. So, as a result, I tried to find out on my own. Of course, I was using areas that were not appropriate to use like pornography and things like this. In a way, it got me involved with sexual addiction as a result of that. It was more about curiosity.

I: How old were you?

S5: Twelve or thirteen, realizing that I was mature. As we were growing up as kids, we'd play house and doctor and dress-up and things like that, and I don't remember having any sexual associations then. The only one I do remember was before my first wife and I were married, we had sex prior to the marriage at least twice, and that was just pure accident. We were there, and it just happened.

I: That was the first time you had sex, with your first wife?

S5: Yes. Then after that, I had experiences with, not prostitutes, but like a lap dance with a stripper and with massage parlors. Those were areas where I did have sexual experiences but not intercourse or anything like that. I don't really feel like I got too badly involved in it, but I got to a point where I could really hurt somebody.

I: In your first marriage?

S5: Yes. I could have done damage. I never had an affair and I never did anything against her as far as having an affair, so in that respect, I didn't cross that boundary, but I probably hurt her feelings in terms of feeling violated by the fact that I went to the adult book stores, used pornography, and things like this.

I: So in your first marriage, was it primarily you using pornography, like video and magazines?

S5: Yes, and adult bookstores, strip clubs, and massage parlors.

I: Were you a born-again Christian then?

S5: Yes, I was, but not a practicing Christian. I was born-again because I accepted Christ, but not being really serious about it.

I: You accepted Christ before you got married?

S5: Yes. I was actually born-again twice. The real time was when I was at [university] and I had pledged my dad's fraternity and I was going through getting accepted, and for some odd reason, I told a pledge off or something, so I got blackballed from the fraternity. My father intervened, but there was nothing he could do about it. So that night, I walked out on the campus grounds and as I was walking around, for some odd reason, a voice came to me and said, "Hey, how about it?" Or something to that effect. So I decided I wanted to give my life to Christ and work with the university fellowship.

I: Did you feel like God spoke to you?

S5: Yes. Basically, at that point. So I became very active in the fellowship at the university. I didn't graduate though because my father yanked me out of school. That was a stupid situation because I got car, and a bunch of us friends went on a trip off campus. When I got back, I failed one of my courses because I hadn't studied. My dad said, "That's it. You're out," for basically two reasons. My sister was going to be going to school, and he didn't want to two kids in school at the same time, so he told me, "You have to go out and get a job," so I did. **I'm not really that happy about it now, but back then I really didn't think about it. It was disappointing, but it wasn't that dramatic for me.** I was not ready for college after high school because I had "C" grades, but some universities didn't take me but the university I was at did. I think my dad pulled strings to get me into that university. So I went down and got in with some seniors when I was a freshman, and they were ready to graduate so they didn't care and they kind of partied a little. I got involved in that, but when I got involved in the fellowship, that helped me get through the end of the semester until my dad yanked me out. At that point, I was a Christian, but I never really practiced it. When I started really getting serious about it was when I was listening to a Billy Graham crusade on television, and really accepted Christ at that point. I became really serious at that point, and I then started to really think about it. I was probably about my late 20s or early 30s. I was already in my first marriage. So we went to church and all that. She was a Christian, but I don't know how serious she was. We had four children in that marriage. We had one that was mentally challenged and twins.

I: How did your pornography use start in your first marriage?

S5: I don't really know. I think the curiosity was still the factor.

I: Your marriage was a happy marriage?

S5: Yeah, it wasn't bad. It wasn't stressful or anything like that. I was working in a plant and then we were transferred downtown, so that gave me access to the cinema and thing like that, places where I shouldn't have been in. I was taking a lot of courses for learning more about my job, and I used some of that time – instead of going to the course, I'd go to a strip club or something. That, of course, was my little secret, and I started using money to pay for stuff like that. That got us into trouble financially. I didn't realize it, but my dad owned our house and paid for the mortgage and gas and all this, and so I didn't know how much we were in debt as far as that was concerned. I should have been using our money in other places.

I: Did your faith have any affect on how you were feeling about going to the strip clubs and other places?

S5: Not at the time, no. I didn't feel like I was doing wrong. Of course, now I know it is. At the time, it seemed like Satan was playing games with me and tempting me. In my case, if a divorce would happen in this marriage, the temptations could happen again. I wouldn't want them to, but they could because of the addiction situation that's there.

I: In your first marriage, did you think it was wrong?

S5: I knew it was wrong, but I thought about the impact because, to me, I wasn't hurting anybody. At least, I wasn't aware that I was hurting anybody, so as a result, there was not reason that I felt to quit. I thought I was sinning against God in a way, deep down inside me, I felt it, but it wasn't strong enough to stop me because I was doing things that were wrong. It just didn't have an impact on my behavior.

I: Were you still going to church at this time?

S5: Yeah, we were still going to church. We were still participating at the Episcopal church. The impact of my behavior on my conscience just didn't have enough of an impact at that point. I do now, but before I didn't. What woke me up was the actual divorce and the re-marriage and actually seeing that I could destroy a second marriage. It hit me right in the face. I hit the wall, and it hurt. I knew then that I did not want to destroy a second marriage. The impact of God and my religious background really came to a head there. God grabbed me and said, "You're wife told you to do something. I'm telling you to do something." Basically, that's when I started to take the bull by the horns. From that I have gotten an insight to be a type of disciple or prophet, God's disciple in the sexual addiction area. I want to take this message to other people. I want to say, "Look at me. Look what it did to me. If I can, I want to stop you from doing the same thing." If I can even say the right words to help people, and that's why I feel that I'm in this group. I feel like God is actually taking me and using me in this area to work with other people. **I think that God allows things to happen, but I don't think he planned for me to have the addiction – well, I don't know. I think God uses any event that comes into your life whether it be an illness or a catastrophic situation. There are a lot of ways that you are used as Christian and as a believer. I think he tests everybody in how much faith and trust they have in him.** That's truthfully a lot of the reason that I'm in it now. I know I have my sobriety, and I probably could stop tomorrow and not act out because I have quite a bit of control now, but there's that area that I still haven't completely conquered, and as a result of that, I want to go back **to that sexual**

behavior. The fantasy and wanting to use pornography is my temptation. Yeah, it's in relation to the pull of pornography.

I: So right now, what you haven't conquered is that you still have sexual temptation from time to time?

S5: Yes. And the other area I participate is because I want to help people. My current wife and I have gone through an awful lot. She was diagnosed with breast cancer and they removed lymph glands. The surgeon did not expect her to live because the lymph glands that they removed were so extensive. It ended up in her collar bone, but through radiation and chemo, they got it. It has been a total of five years that she has been cancer-free, but it was hard, so in the years of marriage, we have grown together as a couple. So when she confronted me with my sexual acting out, combined with almost losing her to cancer, I realized that I didn't want to lose her. Those two reasons are definitely the reasons I have wanted to stay together.

I: Why did your first wife leave you?

S5: She heard that I was associating with pornography and strip clubs and things like that through another person. I guess I talked to someone and in the process of talking, I must have said something about pornography or strip clubs, and that person took it back to my wife. When she found out about it, she didn't like it, and so we ended up getting divorced.

I: When she found out, the two of you got divorced?

S5: Yes, shortly after she found out.

I: Did you have a happy marriage outside of that incident?

S5: Well, it was there. I don't know if it was really happy or not. It was an existence. We put up with each other. Not a lot of emotion or fighting or anything like that, we were just

there. Then when she got her tubes tied, the sex was gone. So, we just sort of participated in the marriage because of the kids.

I: Were you in love before and then it decreased?

S5: Yeah, basically, after we started having kids.

I: When did your sexual acting out start?

S5: It was always there. It was maybe not as pronounced, but it was always there. It got more pronounced as we drew further apart. My acting out came as a kind of relief, an avenue I used to fill the void. In my second marriage, I would still go to strip clubs but not as much then. I was more into adult book stores and used pornography. That was basically the avenue, pornography, adult book stores, and masturbation.

I: Did your faith have any impact on you and your behavior in your second marriage?

S5: Yes, my guilt was more pronounced. At that point, I was more aware that I was doing things wrong. I was violating God's rules. I was going to church more often and more involved in the church. I could feel God saying, "Look, start getting your act together." Tapping me on the shoulder and little voices talking to me. At that point, I started to get involved with prayer and Bible reading and got more involved with choir and more religious activities. That helped me decrease the sexual parts of my life because I spent more time being involved in other things, so time wise, that helped.

I: Did you still sexually act out then?

S5: Yes. Oh yeah.

I: When you did, how did you feel?

S5: Remorseful. Not good about it. I didn't feel as good as I had in the past about it. It was more like, "Okay, I did it. I'm wrong. Let's not try it again."

I: What would happen when you did it again?

S5: The same thing. The same basic situation – “Okay, you did it. Okay, so what.” I’d ask God for forgiveness and let it go at that. That would help the initial pain over the situation. That’s why I think that sexual addiction can really hurt us as human beings. God gave us free will, so God says, “You’re human. I’m going to give you free reign, and, if you mess up, I’m here for you, but I’m not going to keep a rope around your throat like a dog. I’m going to let you go.” I never thought that God was that type of God that he would be so controlling like you were a dog on a leash. I always believed that God was a loving God that said, “I created you as a human being that has free will, and I’m here for you. If you mess up or screw up, come to me. Don’t be afraid and confess it, and I will forgive you.” That’s what is said in the Bible a number of times. Christ died on the cross because we are sinners. We were born sinners and are sinning beings, and as a result of that God put his son on the cross so that all your sins that you do then, now, and in the future will be forgiven, but you have to confess them. That’s exactly the way I depend. If I do something wrong, if I swear, commit adultery or something, yes, I confess it. If I confess it, I know that I will be forgiven by God because He said He will. I know that I sin and I could sin again, but by being involved in helping others, I feel that I’m clearing myself of the sins that I committed. If any of them would ever happen again, I would be able to know how to say, “Okay, God, I’m sorry.” I know that the impact we have in this church and in the community is so great, it’s amazing. It shows how our Lord works in church and through a person and in the atmosphere of religion. It really amazes me because growing up, I didn’t have that. I grew up in a Presbyterian church and the preacher was an older guy that would just get up and ramble, I’d go out of the church and that would be

it. There was no impact that I was left with. I heard him say things, and that was it. When I was in college at the church there, I would leave out of there and say, “Wow! He told me something!” Then my wife and I got involved in the Episcopal church, but it was a weak pastor. We bounced around trying to find the right church. We were invited to this church, and we came down and fell in love with it. We’ve been here for quite a while. The programs that this church has and the things that it does with sexual addiction and everything else are so good for people. I got involved in it. I got elected to the deacons and was very involved with deacon work for some time. I was the assistant deacon before I stepped down.

I: Were you struggling with your sexual addiction at the time?

S5: Yes, it was still there. It’s always been there.

I: Were you acting out at that time?

S5: Yeah. Oh yeah, I was. I’d go to church, I’d go home and be feeling good Sunday, maybe Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday because I went to church. I was feeling good and then something sexual would be there, and I’d get feelings of sexual fantasies.

I: Like something on tv?

S5: Yeah, tv, magazines, just going to a mall and seeing the way that some of these girls dress, going to a beach. Triggers. I would try to put it off, but it wouldn’t always work. I tried to say, “Okay, this isn’t right,” but Satan says, “It isn’t going to hurt you,” so as a result you want to take the temptation and play with it. That’s where it lead me, into playing with it. Unfortunately, that got me into some trouble. In this marriage, I was using money that wasn’t accounted for. If I had ten dollars, I’d end up with five dollars and couldn’t account for where the other five dollars went. That was a suspicion my wife

had, like, “What are you doing with it?” That’s what hurt me more because I didn’t want to say that I used it wrongly, but I know I did, and that bothered me. So that’s why I don’t want to do it anymore, if I can. That would be my pattern though.

I: How often would your pattern happen?

S5: Once every two or three weeks. I’d go two weeks and then I’d get triggered. Then I’d go a month and get triggered. After I acted out, I realized it was wrong and I’d try to make amends for it. I tried to put “blocks” in. Some of the recommendations we use as far as block is “eye blocks,” look away. So, I’d look away or not go to the adult book store or stay away from pornography. If you know it’s in the news stand, don’t go to that section. The other aspect is prayer, praying, “I can’t do this. Someone is going to get hurt, so I can’t do it.” In SA, we have a phone list. Get on the cell phone, call a friend. I don’t use the phone calls, but it’s available, and a lot of the SA guys use it. I don’t use it.

Another thing I don’t use that is available is sponsorship. I don’t have a sponsor, but I will sponsor somebody. With me, I feel that my sponsor is God, and as long as I can answer to God, I’m okay. God helps me stop, so that’s my sponsor.

I: You depend on God to help?

S5: Yes, I do, in prayer and in temptations. If I’m tempted, I tell God, “God, I’m going to do something. Can you stop me? I want to be stopped! Stop me!”

I: Does He stop you?

S5: Yeah

I: How does He stop you?

S5: Basically, turns you around. If you’re driving to an adult bookstore, He turns you around.

I: So you would turn around because God stopped you?

S5: Right.

I: That never happened to you before?

S5: No.

I: Okay, so you would not ask God to stop you or change your direction before? This is something new for you?

S5: Right.

I: Every time you've asked God to take away your temptation or your want to sexually act out, has He done it?

S5: Quite a bit.

I: When hasn't He?

S5: I guess when I've been feeling low. Maybe when I felt that I was wronged. I was blamed for something that was not my fault. At that time, I use it as a crutch – the fantasies, magazines, and stuff like that.

I: So what do you do with that – when you're feeling low and God is not taking it away? You said you're using that as a crutch, so would you just go into that behavior?

S5: Looking at sex magazines or something like that? Yeah.

I: So, if God didn't take it away then you would just sexually act out?

S5: Yeah.

I: How long has it been since you haven't acted out at all?

S5: Probably about a year and five months.

I: So for this year and five months, ever time you've asked God, he's taken temptation away?

S5: Yeah.

I: What if He doesn't next time? Do you have a plan for that?

S5: Yep.

I: What is it?

S5: Don't do it. Just don't do it. Start white-knuckling it [laughs]. Start being strong, basically. I think the organization in itself can help you become that. I know some people who have had to go to inpatient because of their sexual behavior. It's been to that degree, but I don't think I need to do that because I think that my self-control that I can institute within myself with God's help is going to be stronger.

I: So is your plan that God is going to turn you around every time?

S5: Right.

I: Okay, so just so I have your pattern right that you mentioned. Every two or three weeks or a month, you would get triggered sexually and act out. Is that accurate?

S5: It's part and partial of what happens, yes.

I: Is there anything I'm missing in that description?

S5: Yeah, the areas of feeling low about self. Low self-esteem. I don't necessarily have it about myself, but what does hurt me is what somebody else feels about me. If I don't satisfy my wife on every situation. If I get told that I didn't do something right, that bothers me. That triggers feelings of low self-esteems and triggers me to act out to bolster me up. Low-self esteem is a definite trigger.

I: So you would find a strip club or a magazine to make yourself feel better about yourself?

S5: Yes. Because you're using something else to bolster you. In as strip club, they're there to bolster you. They're performing for you. They're making you feel good, of course, because they want your money, but their acting it out – it's a fantasy. It's a fantasy world.

I: And that would make you feel better about yourself when you were feeling low?

S5: Yeah. But I can never visualize myself with a prostitute or anything like that. I cannot see using a woman in that way and being happy about it. I've never done it, and I never really wanted to. Anyway, I remember once, for work, I was staying over in a hotel in [county], and my said to me, "Where you having problems up there or something?" I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "I saw a pornographic magazine in your bag. Where you having sex or something?" I said, "no," and I wasn't. I had a lot of time on my hands when I was up there, and I'd talk to my wife before I'd go to bed, but before I went to sleep, I had time, so I'd use the magazine, but it never crossed my mind to look for adult companionship in the form of a prostitute.

I: Did you ever have any physical affairs in your two marriages?

S5: No, never.

I: So it was always adult book stores, pornography, and strip clubs?

S5: Massage parlors. Well the massage parlors, yeah. That was a little bit physical. There you could get involved with the massage and let it go to sexual extremes. I would do that to a point, but not engaged in sexual intercourse. Oral stimulation, things like that, mutual masturbation.

I: Was that one of the outlets you would also use when you were feeling down or were feeling triggered sexually?

S5: Yes.

I: Was that still every two, three, or four weeks?

S5: Yes. That would be it.

I: That was always the frequency?

S5: Yes.

I: What happened when you decided to get help for your sexual addiction?

S5: I was confronted by my wife. She said, "If you don't get any help, you're out." I had the accident, and she found out through the accident because I had to confess where I was. I had to confess that I was down there at an adult book store. So, she said, "If you're having this problem, you need to get some help."

I: Did she know about the massage parlors?

S5: No, that was only in the first marriage. Massage parlors were in the strip clubs. The second marriage was just adult book stores, magazines, and pornography.

I: No strip clubs?

S5: No. Yeah, I'd rent movies in privacy and things like that. With the adult book stores, I would go to peep shows, but that was it. Also, my parents never found out why I got divorced the first time. They thought that she filed the divorce, and that was it. When I moved back to my parents house, nothing was ever said about it. It was just dropped. They never went into it. They never bothered, and I guess, as a parent, I would want to find out – "What the devil did you do? What caused it?" But they never went into it.

I: Whenever you got divorced, did you continue with your sexual behavior like you had been doing before the divorce?

S5: No. After my divorce, I didn't do as much. I kind of stayed away from it. It wasn't a part of my life between the two marriages. It was very low-key at that point. Where it became more prevalent again was after my present wife had her tubes tied and we became not as active sexually. That's when it started progressing again.

I: Where you actively involved with the church at that point?

S5: Yes, and I had more guilt about it because of that.

I: Did you ever think that your sexual behavior was a problem going into your second marriage?

S5: No. No it was not. In fact, it was a blessing.

I: What was a blessing?

S5: Going into the second marriage. **The fact that we both came from divorces and that we were both coming back from bad situations. I had come from a divorce where it wasn't really my plan and hers was because her husband had been gambling and he lost a lot of money. It was two bad situations that we made a good situation out of.**

I: Did you and your second wife have any problematic issues in the beginning of your marriage?

S5: No. We had a good relationship from the very beginning. Even now in recovery, we can pretty much talk about anything.

I: She's pretty secure in your marriage?

S5: Oh yeah. We have a really good relationship. In my first marriage, toward the end, she started to be more attentive to one of our neighbor's boyfriends that the

daughter had. That really didn't make me jealous, but I didn't care for it. I didn't mention it to her. I think I was resentful a little.

I: Did you blame her for why you were sexually acting out?

S5: In a part way, but I doubt it. Not really, maybe.

I: It was not something that was a consistent theme in your first marriage?

S5: No, not at all.

I: Did you ever try to get help from the church or anyone else prior to the car accident?

S5: No.

I: You mentioned that you became an evangelical Christian twice. Do you think that you had to be re-saved?

S5: Yeah, you could. Oh yes, you could. You could lose your salvation and have to be re-saved.

I: Is that what you think happened to you?

S5: In some ways, yes. Yes. Being baptized and professing your faith – baptism seals it.

I: Okay, so if you backslid again like you did before, would always be saved because of the baptism? Is that the difference/

S5: Yes That is correct in the sense that you'd be saved because of the fact that you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal savior, and you've given him to come into your life and start to control it. You said to God, "I am giving you my will. You have my will."

I: That's what baptism does?

S5: No, baptism takes you from being a Christian to being immersed and then coming back out and being alive again. Yeah, actually born again. Yeah, in a way – I don't know how the definition goes. In my estimation, it's taking a person from sin into the water and then bringing them out, in that respect, I think that's what it is. Coming out of the water is a purification. I was just telling my mother that I want to be gone and with God and ready because I don't want to go through the annihilation.

I: You mean the rapture?

S5: The rapture, yeah. I don't want to be there.

I: Wouldn't you be up there already?

S5: I'd like to be.

I: If you were still on earth when the rapture happened, you think you would still be here?

You think the rapture happens before the tribulation, you mean?

S5: The rapture and the tribulation will happen together, so I'll have to die before the rapture to avoid it, Christian or not.

I: Is spiritual leadership something that is an element in your marriage?

S5: Somewhat. I know I'm good at it. I try to be good at it, but I don't think that I get listened to a lot.

I: By your wife?

S5: Yeah. Well, she's got her problems. Right now our daughter is going through some stuff and she moved back, and two women in one house don't always work [laughs].

I: So was it an issue between you and your wife – you needing to be the head of the house?

S5: No.

I: You have an equal partnership then?

S5: Yeah, she runs the money. I don't play with it. I let her know what I do with it, and that's it. It's never been an issue. We've been pretty equal throughout the beginning, and we feel really strong about each other.

I: What are your views about homosexuality and sexual addiction?

S5: It's an issue. The definition we use for sobriety is no sex with yourself or with anybody else other than a heterosexual. Homosexuality is a violation. It's a violation against God. Gay people, in my estimation, are going to hell, and if they don't straighten up, I pity them because of the fact of Sodom and Gomorrah. Why did God do to Sodom and Gomorrah? He destroyed it. Why? Homosexuality. Same sex marriage, to me, is nothing more than somebody that's weak in an area where they can't associate with the other sex and they draw to their own. I myself, I can't see that. That to me completely turns me off. I would not know how to act. To me, that is repulsive. For a woman to do it with a woman, for a man to do it with a man – I can't see it. It's not natural. Male and female were created. Why monkey around with it? That's God's plan. That's not your plan, that's God's. You're fooling around with something. You're not allowed to do that. It's a violation of God's rule and God's purpose, and when you do it, you're going to be in trouble. I don't think it's a good idea.

I: Can you discuss the nature of your sexual addiction?

S6: The best place for me to begin is even before adolescence because I can remember being sexually aware in the second grade and pursuing one little girl in particular, always making sure that I could sit next to her whenever I could especially during reading because then I had the chance to sit right next to her and I had the chance to touch her. I remember doing it on a regular basis. I remember being, I guess you would call it a voyeur during grade school at every opportunity because at that time, all the girls wore dresses. I'm not sure I knew why I was doing that. I don't have any specific memories up through junior high. We moved from [city] to [another city] and a life changing incident happened **that pretty much opened up the door to girls**. I always had a good voice, and I was in the operetta. It was around Christmas, and there was mistletoe everywhere and it became a game to kiss whoever you could whenever you could, and that just opened up a whole new world for me.

I: How old were you?

S6: Eight grade, so I guess I was 12 or 13. And that's the first time I remember going home and thinking about that and that's my first recollection of masturbation. I was always kind of a little overweight, kind of chunky. **I was always fairly happy. I had friends, and I didn't feel inadequate. I wasn't grossly overweight or anything that kids picked on me or anything like that.** Eighth or ninth grade, I started playing football, and things changed. I changed physically. I grew up a little bit and went into high school, and I had my first steady girlfriend then and found out that I was attractive to

females. I broke up with her and had a series of girlfriends, some sexual activity but nothing serious. Usual high school behavior, magazines, fantasies.

I: Were you an evangelical Christian at the time?

S6: Not really. My family was Christian. I had always been raised in a Baptist family. I was always active in the church. In my junior year of high school, I became leader of my youth group at church. Through my junior and senior years of high school, I was active there. I started dating a girl from church, and we were sexually active just short of intercourse. To back up just a little bit, the early part of my senior year, I met and went with a beautiful young girl who was Ms. Junior Miss of [state]. Before I got involved in church, we went together for over a year, also sexually active. She broke up with me, and that was a very difficult time for me. I think it hardened my heart a little bit. **She was my first true love, not a crush but really, really thought I was in love with her. When we broke up, it was a heart break. Looking back on it, some things that I did to women were kind of a lets get even type of thing.**

I: **Because you got your heart broken initially?**

S6: **Yeah.**

I: **Did you feel like you wanted to get back at women for what happened to you with this girl.**

S6: **Yeah.** I started going with a girl from church and I would see her through the week and sometimes on weekends, but Saturday nights, I'd be at a dance somewhere, which she lived with.

I: Would you go out with other girls too while you were dating her?

S6: Yeah, sort of. Nothing serious. I've looked back at this time and again, looking back at my life and how I lived, and I just gradually veered into – it became the focus of my life a little bit.

I: Seeking out girls?

S6: Yes. Because I was very good at what I did.

I: You mean girls liked you?

S6: Yeah, a lot. I would become whatever they needed me to be. If somebody needed a bad boy then I could do that. If somebody needed someone to nurture them, I could do that, and it really became a game that I was very, very good at. That just went on, and I really didn't look at it as an addiction. I mean, I was a guy. I didn't look at it as a problem. I was envied by other guys. "How do you do that?"

I: Was there any guilt because of your evangelical faith at that time?

S6: No, because my faith wasn't really that strong.

I: Were you born-again at a later time in life?

S6: No, I was born-again when I was fourteen, fifteen maybe. That was very strong for me at the time, but then it was just there. I didn't think about it. I went to the army and met a couple of girls there, nothing serious there, just people to go out with. I stayed in touch with some girls from here for when I came home. I remember coming home one time and calling a girl at eleven o'clock at night saying, "Hey, I'm back in town," and I hadn't talked to her for months, and she was on a date at her apartment. She said, "Well, I got somebody here. Whenever he's gone, I'll put the blind up in the front window, and come on up." That's just pretty much the way it was. I don't know why. I didn't leave

anybody angry or mad, and that just went on for years. I know I hurt people. I got out of the army and now in my early twenties, and the field became broader – married women.

I: You started going after married women?

S6: Not really going after them. I really didn't have to go after anybody.

I: They came to you?

S6: Pretty much. I was in some theater groups because I had a nice voice, and I always enjoyed that. Most of the time, if I just kind of stayed away, they would eventually come – like, “Well, what do I have to do to get his attention?” Ninety percent of the time, that's the way it worked. It must sound like I have an ego the size of this room, but it just seemed to be the way it was. I'm not proud of it. I got involved with a choir group that sang in a hospital and other places around the county, and that's where I met my wife.

Everybody else that I ran with was married. **I was always kind of a loner anyway. The bar scene never really made it for me. That's never where I went looking for women. I was never really into bar hopping. I ran around with a crowd, usually house parties and weekend trips, things like that, and that just wasn't there anymore. There was nothing. I still saw some of them some of the time, but I was still kind of like the odd man out.**

I: Because everyone was married?

S6: Right. I fell in love with her and proposed to her, I guess we knew each other about five months at the time. She was very attractive, and we got married – we knew each other only less than a year. We were sexually active before we got married, unfortunately.

I: Why was that unfortunate?

S6: Well, looking back on it, I wish that we hadn't been because especially for someone like me in my position because by that time, I think with the addiction and all the women. And by that time, I was looking at more hard-core books.

I: Pornographic books?

S6: Yeah, and occasional videotapes once in a while because it always needs to be a little bit more and a little bit more. It would have been nice to hold that excitement for after we were married, but hindsight is wonderful. I don't think it would have made any difference though. We did well. Things calmed down. **I'm not saying the acting out went away. It did not, but I think everything in my situation thinks, "Ah, I'm married. It's going to be the end of whatever I'm doing here – masturbation and everything else," but it's not. It's not an answer.** We had made it through nine years of marriage. We did pretty well. I pretty much stayed on the straight and narrow, no affairs, nothing. Well, I won't say nothing because I continued to act out, to masturbate with magazines and things like that. Magazines, occasional x-rated video. No strip clubs or prostitutes. No internet, nothing there. My wife found a couple of magazines and wasn't happy with that. I threw them away and told her I was sorry, and I wouldn't buy anymore and on and on. **She found them a couple of times, and it was like, "Well, I'll never do that again, I'm sorry." It didn't matter. I just needed to find better places to hide them.**

I: Was this an ongoing problem in your marriage?

S6: The few times that it happened, yeah.

I: Did you and your wife have any initial problems in your marriage when you got married in the beginning?

S6: No. It was really good from the beginning. We had a son, and when he was about three and a half or four, I worked out of the office for a company, and then I went back into the office, and there was a very beautiful young lady that worked there. She was two years younger than I was. I don't know if it was to see if I could do it again. It wasn't really even a challenge. It was just so stupid, but I went ahead and did it.

I: What did you do?

S6: I had an affair with her.

I: So you wanted to see if you still had the skills you had in the past with women?

S6: Yeah, probably.

I: How did you feel?

S6: It made me feel good a little bit because she was gorgeous, she was married, she was everything – because it's gotten to the point where I was very picky before about who I was after, and I just had some beautiful, beautiful women, and she was in the classification. I got caught, of course. It was common knowledge in the office, what was going on. Finally the pressure was too much, and I just kind of gave it up.

I: You got caught by your wife?

S6: Yeah. I got caught, and I finally got tired of lying and getting to the point where you can't remember what lie you told. I just said, "Yeah. I'm having an affair."

I: You told your wife that?

S6: Yes. We were separated for about eight or nine months after I got caught. We had two kids at that time, a boy and a girl.

I: Was there any stress in your marriage prior to the affair?

R: Yeah. I would have to say yes because the acting out and the masturbation was starting to affect our sexual relationship. The fantasy world that I lived in was starting to intrude on the intimacy that we had in our marriage. There was just no doubt about that. Our sexual relationship was good, but like an addict, it had to be more and more and more. You always need a higher fix. You always need more, so just the mundane making love to the same woman for nine years. To an addict, that gets old and dull, so even though you're with your wife, your mind is going somewhere else.

I: Are you attributing your pornography use to that?

S6: Yeah, sure because now you are bringing somebody else in to the intimacy with your wife that should be so private and so personal, and you can't do that. It's a gift from God, and you can't do that. You can't do that and maintain the closeness that should be there. It just goes away. She knew it. I knew it.

I: Was your sex life decreasing?

S6: No, it was not what it should have been before the affair, and it just went down after. We were separated for a while. The woman that I was with, in retrospect, was lousy in bed compared to my wife and compared to eighty percent of the women that I had been with. She was terrible, but when you're looking at that kind of a body – woopee.

I: So she looked good, but she was terrible in bed?

S6: Yeah, exactly. So eventually, I saw my wife after all this time. We decided that we needed to get back together. The unfortunate thing about it was that we didn't do anything about trying to fix the damage that had been done. I just came home, and there wasn't much done or said about it. I just came home, and that was pretty much it. We just went from there.

I: You didn't talk about it.

S6: Not a lot, no. We didn't get counseling. I still wasn't aware that I was an addict. I may have even been borderline then, but it really went down the tubes from there. Our sex life was okay for a while. It was good to be back. It was good to try to regain some of that intimacy, at least it was for me. I don't think it ever was for my wife. It just was okay, and then it went away.

I: Your sex life?

S6: Yeah. And that's was twenty-five, thirty years ago, and we have fought through that. Some good times, some bad times, but that's when I really, really started acting out and just leaning constantly on pornography, movies, fantasy. I have a file in my head that is just unbelievable.

I: Did you start sexually acting out after your sex life started decreasing?

S6: I turned immediately to acting out like I never had done before, and that's where I lived for twenty-five years. I was a wasted twenty-five years. It cost me dearly. I'm still fighting to save a marriage. It cost me monetarily because I was a pretty good writer, and I think that's what I really should have done, but I didn't have the time or discipline to sit down and do it.

I: To write books?

S6: Yeah. I wrote a lot of poetry. I wrote a lot of lyrics. I wrote short stories.

I: You said that you acted out like you never had before. Did your behavior escalate from pornography use and masturbation?

S6: It escalated because I had numerous affairs after that. Nothing like the one with the first lady, but a couple of short term ones, a couple that lasted several years on and off.

I: With people that you knew already?

S6: From work mostly, yeah.

I: Not anyone you met on chat lines or any avenues like that?

S6: No, no. I always stayed away from the internet because I was so afraid of getting caught. Occasionally I'd get caught up looking at some pornography but that was the exception rather than the rule. I was just scared to death of getting caught on the internet. No strip clubs. No prostitutes, nothing like that, always females, always fantasy. I'd see somebody at the supermarket and I'd go around the aisle three times just so I could file it away, and that's what I did.

I: Were you and your wife having sex at this point during your sexual acting out?

S6: It was still there but sporadic, sometimes good, most of the time, not so good, but it was still there up until five years ago. That's when it pretty much came to a halt. That's when I really found out what was wrong because I had never even heard the word before – sex addict or sexaholic. I went to Every Man's Battle and found out who I was.

I: How did that happen – deciding to go to Every Man's Battle?

S6: Pressure from my wife.

I: Did you get caught by her?

S6: No, no. It was just like, "Hey there's something wrong here. There's something wrong with you. There's something wrong with us, and you need to try and find out."

I: Why did she think that there was something wrong with you?

S6: Because our sex life was non-existent. She'd say, "You don't want me. I catch you looking at these other women. What's wrong? You had this affair a long time ago? Why did you do that?" She has a million questions, which I understand.

I: Was she not feeling a sexual or emotional connection with you? Was that why she though something was wrong – because she felt you weren't interested in her?

S6: Right.

I: But she did not know that any of the affairs were going on?

S6: No.

I: She never caught you for that?

S6: No. She may have suspected, I don't know. We were just growing further and further apart and the emotional distance and the physical distance was a problem. There was no sexual attraction, no spark, nothing.

I: Did she think that you were a sex addict?

S6: She had no idea what it was either. She never heard the term.

I: How did you end up going to Every Man's Battle? Because that's a pretty specific group.

S6: At the time, I really had been led back to my faith by my son. He's a minister and he started a church with another minister, and I felt that I needed to do something. We developed a habit of listening to the Christian radio station and Steve Arterburn, and I knew that they were coming to town to do Every Man's Battle. I read the book and had identified with a lot of the stuff that was going on in the book.

I: Did your son know about your affairs and what you were doing?

S6: Yep.

I: Did your son lead you to Every Man's Battle after you told him what was going on?

S6: No. It was a decision that my wife and I made. It was almost like, you need to go to this or you need to do something or we're done. My son didn't really know what was going on until later on.

I: Until after you went to Every Man's Battle?

S6: Yeah. He knows everything.

I: I see. So you and your wife decided that you should go to Every Man's Battle?

S6: She pretty much said to me, "You need to go to this or I'm done." She didn't know that the word sex addict existed.

I: But she knew that something was wrong sexually with you?

S6: Right. Exactly.

I: Is that why she picked Every Man's Battle?

S6: Yeah. She said, "We need to do something. I think we both agree this would be a good place," because we had a lot of respect for Steve Arterburn and the things that he presents on his show. We had both read the book and recognized, in my life, the things that were reflected in this book, which amazed me.

I: And that's why you ended up going?

S6: Yeah.

I: What happened after you went?

S6: Well, I came out of there with, of course, all the answers four and a half years ago.

Hallelujah, I know what's wrong with me. It's over.

I: And have you been in recovery ever since?

S6: Yes.

I: You said that you started to get back into your faith because of your son. Did your spiritual beliefs have any effect on your sexual behavior?

S6: Yes, very much so. I can't begin to tell you how thankful I am to God to my "higher power" – to me there's no question in my mind that it is God, and the help that I have received from Him. Without turning my life over to Him, there's no way that I could have done this because I can't, as testified by the twenty-five years that I was in this addiction because it was always like, what's wrong with you? You've got to stop doing this. I'd think, I know I can do this. I can take care of this myself. I'd stay sober from masturbation for two weeks and then bang, that's over, that's done with at the sight of a beautiful woman or a new Playboy – hey, I got to pick that up and see who's naked this month. So then, it's gone and I'd think, ugh, what'd you do? Well, I better start again, and ten days later it's the same thing again. Now I don't have to depend on myself. I still get in those situations. Every day I could fall flat on my face, but after fighting for four and a half years to get where I am today, am I going to give up that time and that struggle for ninety seconds of self-imposed pleasure? I don't think so.

I: Did you ever feel guilty about your behavior because of your faith?

S6: No, it was because I failed, and I could never forgive myself for this whole mess, and it's been very, very hard. I screwed up a life here and my wife's even more so, really badly.

I: When did you start getting more heavily into your faith?

S6: Probably over the last two years. It took me a long time to forgive myself to realize that I am forgiven and that I'm a righteous man.

I: Did you not being able to forgive yourself keep you away from your faith? You said you were born-again at fourteen.

S6: Fourteen years old, yeah. From the time I realized what I was and that I had an addiction that I never heard about and I didn't understand, I thought that when I came out four and a half years ago, man I identified this and it's over. Four and a half years ago I think that I may have a little bit of a handle on it. Four and a half years later, I think my wife and I might be on the same playing field, I think she's gotten to the point where she's stopped throwing grenades at me and I don't blame her for that. Two years ago, I finally got to the point where I forgave myself and was able to say, "God, here's my life. I can't do anything with this. Give me a hand here. Take it and please do something with it because my fingertips are bloody from trying to crawl out of this hole that I dug for myself."

I: How do you deal with it now?

S6: I just deal with it as the day comes and thank God for each day, and it's still not easy because I have dug such a hole that at this point in my life, to try to look for new beginnings is very hard. With the economy and the way I screwed up our finances over the years, it's very hard. These should be times where we're planning on where we want to go in the summer, but it's not. I'm retired and been retired for almost ten years. But it's happened that way because of my addiction and what I did and the things that I didn't do. I wasn't careful with money. It wasn't like I spent thousands of dollars on my addiction. I didn't, but everything else was secondary in my life. It just was. The only thing that wasn't secondary was my kids, and I'm not sure how that happened. I know I hurt them a little bit just because I hurt their mom so much, but I never ever missed something that

they were in or was not there for them because I was off with the latest bimbo or acting our somewhere. My relationship with my kids is just the best. My son knows everything about me, and he's had some minor problems with it and has made me an accountability partner for him. I feel good about that. I get a report on where he goes on his computer because he said, "It's just crazy sometimes, what I want to do. I can't."

I: Your son struggles with sexual behaviors too?

S6: Yeah. I'm his accountability partner along with his uncle. The internet just screws me up, so I just don't go there. I do not go there. Everything else in my life for so many years was secondary. That's how powerful it was. When my mind should have been concentrating on finances – I had to put some more money in my 401k for retirement, things like that. When I was offered an early retirement, rather than sit down and really carefully look at all the options and the money that I owed, I just jumped at it and left it to chance – because that gave me more free time that I could run around and do this that and the other. It was a terrible move, but I jumped at it.

I: You said that your son knows everything about you. How did that happen? How did you end up telling him about all your affairs?

S6: My wife doesn't know, but just in talking to my son about our marriage problems over the years. He was aware that I went to Every Man's Battle, and we have breakfast once in a while and at one of the breakfasts, he said, "You know, I struggle a little bit with some of that too," and I just told him. I felt I could. We've always been very, very close.

I: You told him about all the affairs you had?

S6: Yeah. I told him that I had other affairs besides the one that his mom knew about. I didn't give him a lot of detail or anything, but pretty much told him the story.

I: Is your son the only one that knows in the family?

S6: Yes. I talked to him about whether I should tell my daughter or not, but he said he really didn't think so. I also talked to my therapist about it, and he really didn't see a need.

I: So only your son and your therapist know?

S6: Yes.

I: Okay, I see. How was your childhood growing up?

S6: It was pretty good. My relationship with my parents was also pretty good. I didn't see my dad much because he worked. My mom was a little tough because she had to be. She was a little bit harsh when I was younger.

I: Was she strict?

S6: Yes, and I saw my dad on the weekends. He worked second shift, so through the week, I didn't see a lot of him. I got closer with him a little bit – I'm not sure my parents ever knew what to do with me. My older brothers were a year apart, and I was kind of the black sheep of the family, I guess you could put it that way. They were both very bright, valedictorians of their class two years running. I was kind of the hood of the family.

I: You weren't as much of an achiever as your brothers?

S6: I could have been, but I wasn't.

I: Was that a problem for your parents?

S6: A little bit, yeah. I was into cars, fast cars and fast women. I guess I'd rather work on that than work on an algebra problem. I think I was as smart as either one of them, but I just didn't apply myself. I know it aggravated both of my parents, but I didn't care. My

brothers both went to college. I went to college for a while, paying my own way because there wasn't any more money when I was ready to go to college.

I: Your brothers' college educations were paid for, but you had to pay your own way?

S6: Yeah.

I: Did you ever ask God to change your behavior or take away your addiction?

S6: I don't think He can. I think He can help me if I turn it over to Him. If I see a very attractive lady, I can say, "Hey, I can't handle this. I'm going to give it to you." I don't think I can beat my addiction without my faith.

I: Did your faith have any impact on your thoughts or feeling in your active addiction?

S6: Before Every Man's Battle? It did. I'd think, "God, what's wrong with me? Why can't I beat this?" I would ask God that. "Why can't I stop this?" Everything was about me, which my wife used to accuse me of all the time but I could never see it. But it was all about me – Why can't *I* stop this? Why can't *I* do this?

I: Did you depend mostly on willpower?

S6: Oh yeah, because I didn't even know what I was dealing with, and I thought, why can't I do this? I've always been able to do everything. I'm always the smart one. I'm always the one with the plan. I'm always the one that everyone turns to when they have a question. **I always had a tendency to be an organizer in the group, always turned out to be the leader in church and in the family. If there was a problem in the family they would ask what I thought and what I wanted to do.** So why can't I handle this?

What's up here? I don't think my faith was part of my acting out. My faith was over here and my acting out was over here. I don't think it was until they came together or I

allowed my faith to grab the other part of my life and understand that my faith is the answer to get me out of this. I kept them separate.

I: Did your faith and your sexual life conflict for you?

S6: They would conflict only through me feeling guilty. I'd feel bad that I did it again.

I: What did you do with that?

S6: I'd say I was sorry. I'd ask for forgiveness and just leave it at that and then move on to the next time I was going to do it again. I felt better temporarily. I'd say, "I'm sorry. I won't do that again," until ten days later or three days later or three hours later and again, "I'm sorry. I won't do that again," and then "I'm sorry. I won't do that again," and again and again and again.

I: Were you involved in the church through your active addiction?

S6: Yeah, I was involved in the church ever since my son started it which was about four years ago, and I think that's one of the things that has kept our marriage together because we work – every service they have a meal that's part of the service, part of the communion, and we all sit around and talk. It's a very unusual church. It's amazing. When my son started the church, we were the first twenty that were there.

I: Did you go to church during your active addiction?

S6: Yeah. I was an elder in the church.

I: How did you deal with that, knowing you were acting out sexually at the time?

S6: It didn't bother me. It was a separate life. Your addiction is over here and your real life is over hear, never the two shall meet. There was no confliction at all. In my addiction, there were two women that were long-time affairs and several that were just on and off whenever the occasion arouse.

I: You would have a few affairs at a time?

S6: Yes, sort of.

I: What did having the affairs do for you?

S6: To some degree, it gave me some comfort. I guess it made me feel loved – more with the two that were long-term.

I: You didn't feel loved?

S6: No, not a whole lot.

I: In general or by your wife?

S6: By my wife. We were just co-existing. Really both of the affairs were when I was still working fifteen years ago, and I was still very much into my addiction. I haven't seen any one of these ladies for probably fifteen years, and I'm pretty sure how one of them feels, and I'm pretty sure I know how the other one feels. I think I could pick up the phone and call one and we could have lunch tomorrow. The other one would be cold, and we might have a brief conversation, and that would be the end of it. The one who would have lunch with me, I would be tempted to have lunch with her.

I: Are you still struggling with this?

S6: The only reason I'm still struggling with it is because I'm still struggling with the relationship I have right now with my wife, and I think I'm smart enough to know that the relationship with this other woman probably would have been, fifteen years down the road, maybe in the same place that my relationship with my wife is right now because no relationship stays where that one was forever.

I: So you left that relationship at a good place?

S6: Pretty much, yeah. It would have aged and gotten dust on it the same as with any other relationship that anyone has ever had with anybody. I'm still struggling, but I also know that I shouldn't be because it's just fantasy. That's fantasy to make myself feel better because I'd like to go back to that time when it felt really good, but the absolute reality of the situation is that I have got a relationship to work on here that we have made strides on that in the end, if it works out, will be as fulfilling as that was, and that's where my focus needs to be. I just need to be more realistic about what I'm doing, that's all.

I: So you still have a long road ahead of you, you and your wife?

S6: Oh yeah, long, long way to go.

I: Are you still not feeling loved by your wife? Are you in that same place?

S6: We're doing better, but no. We're still in a very difficult situation. She doesn't understand the addiction. It's still very personal to her. I can't tell her, "This was not about you." There's no way that she'll ever believe that.

I: Is your wife born-again too?

S6: Yeah.

I: Both of you go to church?

S6: Yeah, and like I said, that's the one thing that could have saved everything so far.

I: What about being a spiritual leader? Was that ever an issue for you?

S6: Not an issue for me. It's an issue for her.

I: How is it an issue for her?

S6: Because people don't know who I really am. I'm kind of a father figure at church because probably about eighty percent of the people there are younger, under thirty, and they look at me that way. A lot of them will come up and give me a hug and call me

“pap.” She has a problem with some of the girls that do it. I try to avoid that because they’ll just come up and throw their arms around me, and I try to avoid the full frontal hugs and keep it to the side now. I’m doing pretty good with that. Since I’ve been at the church from the beginning, and since I’m the pastor’s dad, they look to me for a little bit of guidance, a little bit of spiritual guidance, and that bothers my wife.

I: Does she think you’re a hypocrite?

S6: Yeah. She’s thrown that at me because they don’t know who I am. But I think they do. That’s not who I am. That’s who I was.

I: Your wife doesn’t see it that way?

S6: No. Not always.

I: What about being the head of the house in your family? Was that ever an issue or expectation?

S6: No, I don’t think so. It’s changed over the last few years. We used to have some really, really ugly arguments, just horrendous.

I: About being the head of the house?

S6: No, just about this whole situation in general, and that would come up sometimes, about hugging the girls in church, about anything you could think of. It’s calmed down a little bit, and she finally said, “I don’t like who I’ve become.” She is in counseling with someone also. She says, “I don’t like that I’m this screaming bitch.” So we came a ways from that, but for a long time, I gave her too much leeway. Maybe not, I don’t know. But she could say just about anything she wanted in an argument, and I really had no defense. I understand that I don’t have any defense for what I’ve done. There is no defense for it,

and that's really, really been an issue for her – "Well, you're being defensive. I don't like your attitude. I don't like your tone of voice."

I: You're not allowed to be defensive?

S6: No. Not allowed to be defensive. I have to watch my tone of voice in any discussion, and she gets the final say on whether my tone of voice is good or bad. It doesn't matter how I'm talking to her. I could be sitting like this, and she won't like my body language. A couple of months ago we were into something, and she blew up again. And I just told her, I said, "I thought this wasn't going to happen again," and this was about a week after she told me that she wasn't going to be shouting and screaming anymore. And I just told her, "I'm tired of not being able to just talk to you. You tell me I never talk to you from my heart. I am tired of just sitting here and listening to you and you determining what I was saying and how I'm saying, and so that's done." I said, "I'm going to talk to you, and if you don't like my tone, I'm sorry. If you don't like what I say, I'm sorry. And that's the only time I'm going to say I'm sorry. I've apologized to you ten thousand times, so I'm going to tell you exactly what I'm feeling, and it sounds defensive then it's going to sound defensive." I said, "I'm done tip-toeing around. Maybe that good or maybe that's bad, but that's the way it's going to be." I said, "I'm supposed to still be the head of this household, and that's just the way it's going to be."

I: How'd that go?

S6: She really didn't say much, but that's just the way it's going to go. I can't do that anymore because it just gives her too much leeway. I understand what I have done to her, but sometimes I think, and this will sound terrible, but even my therapist says it

sometimes – she needs to get down off the cross because that seems to be where she exists. She needs to be the best. She just needs to be up there.

I: What do you think about your addiction now in retrospect? Do you think it's brought you closer to God or are you thankful for it on any level?

S6: I wish it never happened. It did happen, and I think it has brought me closer to God, but I'm not so thankful for it.

I: Has God ever spoken to you about your addiction or anything else?

S6: No. Not directly.

I: What are you involved in now for your recovery?

S6: SA two nights a week and individual counseling.

I: Did you ever try to get help from the church or from anybody else before you went to Every Man's Battle?

S6: No.

I: With the current stress in your marriage, how are you dealing with it now?

S6: The instances of being tempted are far less than what they were before. It was a constant battle just about every minute of every day. There are still temptations every day. Seeing an attractive woman – you would have been a temptation in times passed, but things are different in my life and in my mind now. I look at you as a very, very attractive woman, but I will not file you away to be used later.

I: How do you do that?

S6: It's just become a lifestyle as opposed to the lifestyle I had before. I may thank God for you for creating a beautiful woman, but that's all I will do. My biggest enemy right

now is my mind and the things I have on file there and the things that, for no reason at all, will explode – not even during stressful times, any time. If I get, as we say in SA, slimed.

I: What does that mean?

S6: You get caught unaware. There are defenses that you have – I mentioned seeing a beautiful woman, especially in the summer. If you're in the supermarket and you see somebody in shorts or something, I used to go around and look again and look again, but now instead of following, you turn your cart around and go down two aisles and seek out something else and try not to take that second or third or fourth look. It's just ingrained into my psyche – don't do that, you don't need to do it. You look away. You avert your eyes. It's things that you learned in Every Man's Battle. It's things that you learned in SA. Victoria Secret is on TV, so I'll change the channel. Getting slimed is running into something when you're completely unaware, and you're not expecting anything. You come around the corner in the supermarket and you're looking for something, and there's somebody in a halter top bent over picking something off a bottom shelf, and you're looking right at her. That's getting slimed. When you least expect it, there's something in your face. So those are the things that you use. You see a beautiful woman, and you say, "God, thank you for that beautiful woman. I hope she has a nice day. My name is yada yada. I love my God. I love my wife. I love my son. I love my daughter," and by that time, your mind is turned, and you're away from that. If you use them, they're going to work, and after time it becomes almost automatic. It doesn't always work. Sometimes you really have to go to extremes, but usually, it's pretty good.

I: What extremes do you go to?

S6: Just prayer.

I: You pray to God about it?

S6: Yeah. Direct line. "I can't handle this. I know you can, and nothing else is working. Please give me a hand here. Take this away. I can't do this." One of things that has gotten me through a lot is just thinking, "Is it worth it?"

I: So you also look at the realistic part of the situation?

S6: Right. Is it worth it? No.

I: So that combined with prayer. If God doesn't take away your temptation, do you move to the realistic strategy?

S6: Yep.

I: And that works for you?

S6: So far.

I: How long have you been an evangelical Christian?

S6: I don't know how to answer that. From the time I was fourteen or from the time I really came to God which was probably about five years ago.

I: Do you think that you can lose your salvation and get it again?

S6: I think you can leave it behind and go back and get it. I think to really be committed and seeking answers, I'm going with five years.

I: Whenever you got saved at fourteen years old, how long do you consider being an evangelical Christian then?

S6: Probably about seven years.

I: Seven years and then five years with a lapse in between?

S6: Oh yeah. Serious lapse [laughs].

I: So you don't think that you can lose your salvation once you're saved initially?

S6: Hm. Can you lose your salvation? Yeah, I guess you can. I'd have to say, yes you can.

I: You feel that you can lose your salvation, and that's what happened to you?

S6: Yeah.

I: Okay. What are your views on sexual addiction and homosexuality?

S6: I really don't have a personal experience with it. I was approached one time, but that's it. I'd say about twenty-five percent of the SA group appears to have had some homosexual contact, but I have no feeling about it really one way or the other. I don't look down on it.

I: Do you think it can be part of a healthy relationship?

S6: Tough question because I got two of the gentleman that I work with in the kitchen every Sunday who are partners, and I like them both very much. I'm really torn about that because they are accepted in the church for what they are, and I really don't know how to answer that question. I don't necessarily condone what they're doing nor condemn what they're doing. I know what the Bible says about it, but I can't bring myself to tell them that they have to stop. They've been together for twenty-two years.

I: What do you think the Bible says about it?

S6: That it's wrong. I can't condemn them. They will be judged. It's not for me to say.

APPENDIX F

Conflicted Childhood

When his father left, S1's mother blamed him for the divorce because she said that S1 was the cause since, when he was born, his father loved him and not her anymore.

Being born-again fulfilled the emptiness of his father's wound and his mother's rejection of him.

Disconnection from Father

He idolized his father and always tried to please and be what he could for him, and when his father left the family, this created a huge void for S1.

His father was his idol, but S1 felt like he was still never good enough in his father's eyes.

When his father was on his death bed with congestive heart failure, they would take him one hospital after another for about six months trying to prolong his life not believing that he was going to die. S1 would sit there with his dad, and they would talk. They would talk about baseball, football, the kids, and work, but S1 never heard what he wanted to hear from his dad, which was, "You're a good son. You're significant. You mean something. I love you." He never heard that from his dad before he died.

Initial Sexual Exploration & Action

When he was 12 or 13, a friend told him about masturbation, and he would masturbate to sexual images of women, and it was great for him at the time.

Using Sex or Relationships as a Way to Feel Affirmed

He was always looking for a woman that was going to satisfy him physically, mentally, and emotionally.

He finally thought that he had met the woman of his dreams. She was in another city, and he would always plan his travel schedule around her schedule to make sure he could see her. It started believing that she was the one for him, and he was willing to leave his wife and kids to be with her. She was the fantasy woman that he always envisioned. She was rich. She was beautiful, and she liked him. When he was with her, it was like the rest of the world didn't exist, and he thought that he had finally found what he was searching for.

During a typical day, S1 would get up in the morning and check the chat line to see who had messaged him to see if there was this answer on the other side of the line that was going to fulfill him. He thought that he would finally find the answer and feel significant when someone would tell him, "You're wonderful."

Guilt over Sexual Acts Due to Faith

He never went had intercourse a girl in high school, but it was constantly on his mind. He could not do it because he was a Christian, and he felt that it was wrong.

Even though masturbation felt good, he did not feel guilty enough to stop or it was not a consuming guilt at the time.

He felt guilty when he went to college because he could not stop masturbating, and he knew it was wrong. When he first became saved, it was a non-issue because he was focused on learning about God and seeking to find out who God was. Then, the more he found out about God and the more he continued with his sexual behavior, the more it convicted him.

Preoccupation with Sexual Behavior Resulting in it Becoming a Substantial Part of Life

He was starting to dabble in internet pornography and it was consuming a lot of his time.

He spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on escorts and travel, and he would get the money by embezzling from his company just to support his habit because once he got immersed in that lifestyle, he could not stop.

His sexual life consumed him and he never felt satisfied. When he was in the middle of it, the only thing that mattered was how he was going to get his next hit or how he could feed his addiction. He always thought that the next act was going to save him, that the next big thing was going to finally be what he need to be fulfilled, and that cycle just repeated over and over again.

His addiction took him to some places where he thought he would never go, and it got to the point where it was consuming his life. He would get up in the morning and ask himself, "How am I going to feed this addiction today?" It normally would start with checking the chat line to see who had messaged him the day before. If he couldn't meet up with a certain woman or something did not materialize, he would go to the internet because he was one click away from image after image after image. There would be days where he would be immersed on the internet for 10 to 12 to 14 hours at a time trying to balance work and his addiction. If he didn't have access to the computer, he would go to hotel rooms where he would call numerous escorts. Sometimes he would call 1, 2, 3 escorts a day. A lot of times, the escort would not get there or she would get there and he was not physically attracted to her but had sex with her anyway. Then he'd call again hoping that somebody better would come that he would be physically attracted to. He also had affairs at work.

He was traveling at the time, and would plan his travel according to whatever city he could go where he knew somebody, and before he would go there, he would surf the internet for escort services and try to line them up by the time he got there. He would plan his work schedule around his addiction.

At the end of his typical day, he would come home about eight and just collapse on the couch because he was so exhausted from not getting caught or doing what he needed to do.

Separating Married Life from Sexual Life

In the seventh year of his marriage, he went to a bachelor party and a woman was performing at the party and performing sexual acts in the back. He was drunk and went in the back and had sexual acts performed on him. It felt good, and when he went home; he didn't say anything, and he didn't get caught. That opened up a secret life for him because he did not get caught. All this behavior that he used to fantasize about actually happened and he was able to separate that from his marital life. He would go home and be completely numb to his wife and when he started to travel and got some money, he started going to strip joints.

They would go to counselors, and he would never divulge his behavior.

After counseling, he would go along with the program, telling his wife and his counselor what things he would do, and he would do things like clean the kitchen and show that he was trying to make some sort of effort, while he continued to make sure that he did not get caught for his sexual behaviors.

He never addressed the core problem, which was the sexual addiction, and his wife had no clue.

He was tired, irritable, miserable, and trying to hide everything from his wife, so his life would consist of sexually acting out and hiding that he did act out, then feeling guilty for acting out, and begging and pleading God, asking God to take his sexual urges from him.

He thought his behavior was just behavior that men did. He started hanging around with some professional men who had the attitude of "have fun, just don't get caught. It's okay, just leave it out there, don't get involved, just do your thing; you need to have your needs met and come home and be the great husband."

He had never divulged his behavior except to some guys who knew what he was doing, but those were guys he hung around with that did the same thing, but not to the degree that he did.

He could not tell his wife about his sexual behavior even after he decided to get help because he thought that if he told her everything he would not have a chance to see if he could get better because things would be over between them, and so three months later he went to Every Man's Battle without telling his wife about his sexual past.

Separating Religious Life from Sexual Life

As a young Christian, he never exposed his sexual behaviors. It was just like living in the closet. It was just something that he had to deal with that he never brought to God or never brought to anybody. It was just a habit or something that was not that big of a deal because he felt he was not hurting anybody. He thought, "It's okay, nobody's hurting. I'm just doing this in private. I'm just doing this in secret."

He was miserable around his wife and kids but only miserable behind closed doors. In public, he was great.

Reaction Formation Parallel

A couple days prior to getting caught on the chat line, S1 was at church making a great speech about his dad and the importance of family. He was playing the part of the great husband, the father, the Christian man, and talking about the love and honor and respect of how his dad was a great man. S1 knew that he was lying on the altar of God, but he felt great because people told him how great he was, and he was painting this image of him living the ultimate life.

The family confronted his brother-in-law about an affair he was having, and he admitted to the affair and said that he wasn't going to stop. The family was so hurt that they kicked him out and never talked to him. S1 stopped talking to him too because he thought, "I can't be associated with this. What he did was utterly wrong, how could he do that?"

He realized that the way that he was trying to recover was to be good, just like he was with his dad. He thought, "When I'm good, I'm accepted and loved."

Asking God to Change Him

He was tired, irritable, miserable, and trying to hide everything from his wife, so his life would consist of sexually acting out and hiding that he did act out, then feeling guilty for acting out, and begging and pleading God to ask him to take his sexual urges from him.

He tried on his own to recover because, for years, he would beg and plead with God to take this from him. God never did. S1 would bargain with God, "If you take this behavior from me, I'll go to church more often. I'll read the Bible more. I'll be a better husband."

He knew the truth and just could not live it. He tried many times repenting, even going into churches and getting re-saved but never stuck to it because he was never willing to address what he was or who he was, and what he was doing.

Negative Feelings about God

He felt that God never listened and God let him do things that he could not believe that he could ever do.

Even after praying to God to take his behavior from him, he would act out and then feel horrible guilt and shame, and he felt at that point that God had turned His back on him.

Using the Relationship with God as a Rationalization to Continue or Increase Behavior

S1 was just expecting God to take his sexual urges away, and then he'd serve him once He took them away, but God never took his sexual urges and behaviors away. He tried this pattern for years and eventually left his faith altogether because he figured A) God was not big enough to take this from him, because He wasn't doing it. B) God could care

less about him, and C) he felt he was going to hell, and if he's going to go to hell anyway then he might as well have fun and do what men do.

Everyday he would get down on his hands and knees and beg and cry to God, "Take this from me. I'll never do it again," figuring that God was going to love him and then he'd be fine.

When S1 would take God's word as it is, he would look at God's high expectations such as "if you look at a woman with lust in your heart, you've committed adultery." S1 realized that he could not live by the standards that God wanted, and that was harmful for S1 because he would often think, "Screw it, I can't do this. How could I possibly ever live out what He's saying?"

Feeling that Marriage Would Solve Problems

He would pray to God during his sophomore and junior years of college to send him a wife. He was asking God to send him a wife because he felt guilty about what he was doing sexually.

He was always looking for the Christian woman that would be the one for him so he would not have to worry about all his sexual urges anymore.

Unrealistic Expectations about Sex

He ended up getting a wife, but it did not help minimize his sexual urges because intimacy with his wife was not what he thought it was going to be from a physical stand point.

When he was in the fantasy world and viewed images and watched sexual movies, he would envision that the sex in his fantasy world would be normal and common place in real life because it looked so great on TV and it looked so real. When he met someone in real life and it did not happen in that way, it was a big disappointment and a turn off for him.

In the movies or in the fantasy, the woman would have sex at any time, but when he got married, his wife may have been sick, have her period, or could have been nursing a child. So suddenly, this fantasy and the sexual projection that he thought was rightfully his and that he thought he was going to get from his spouse did not materialize. Sex with his wife was good, but it was not the ideal or what he expected, which was dirty, whatever he wanted, and no holds barred.

Initial Trouble In Marriage

He had married his wife at an early age, and he did not think he was ready to get married. He had asked God to send him a wife, but he did not think she was the one because they did not share the same evangelical faith and because they had to get married because she was pregnant. He thought he was robbed, so then he started to get angry. He had prayed for a wife from God, but he was angry because she was not the ideal or what he thought he needed or wanted.

The marriage just happened so fast while he was at the height of his sexual awareness, wanting to experiment sexually.

He was a Type A personality, aggressive, go getter, life of the party, and she was reserved, quiet, and shy. She hated that about him, and S1 hated the part where his wife would try to keep him from being the life of the party. It was very, very difficult.

Ongoing Trouble in Marriage

S1 and his wife had tried to get help three or four times with counseling because there was a problem with their marriage. They would go to counselors, and he would never divulge his behavior. He thought it was always his wife's fault, and he was always trying to get her to act the way that he thought she should act.

The marriage was troublesome, and his wife always said, "We're going to get a divorce once the kids are grown." She was only going to stay married because of the kids.

His marriage was problematic because his day was consumed with trying to meet his needs with sex, so he had nothing left for his wife or for the kids.

Blaming Spouse

He thought his behavior was his wife's fault, and he was always trying to get her to act the way that he thought she should act.

He would look at his wife everyday and hate himself. He would come home and look at her, knowing what he was doing to her behind her back, and then he would look at himself in the mirror and hate himself, and he thought that the only way to get rid of that hate was to get rid of her.

The day before he went to Every Man's Battle, he looked at his wife and told her, "I'm going away, and if I get better, and you don't, I'm leaving you." He thought it was her fault that he had to go.

Using Sexuality or Fantasy as a Way to Cope

At night when he was alone with his thoughts, he would fantasize a while and sexually pleased himself but then the thoughts came right back.

For years, he dreamed of his wife dying because if she died, S1 felt he could be free to have all his fantasies met without any guilt over cheating on her. At that point, he had lost his faith, but he knew what he was doing was wrong.

Guilt over Sexual Acting Out During Marriage

He was tired, irritable, miserable, and trying to hide everything from his wife, so his life would consist of sexually acting out and hiding that he did act out, then feeling guilty for acting out, and begging and pleading God to take his sexual urges from him.

The sexual behavior that he was engaging in was destroying him and holding him in shame, guilt, and contempt.

At that point in their marriage, he had lost his faith, but he knew what he was doing was wrong.

He would come home and look at his wife, knowing what he was doing to her behind her back, and then he would hate himself.

Exposure Causing S to Confess & Try to Change

He told his wife about the affair and that he wanted to leave her, and his wife threw him out of the house, and that was when reality hit him, when he was out of the house. He felt like a failure because he was missing his kids, and he was thinking, “How could you do this?” He broke it off with the other woman.

A college peer pointed out that S1’s sheets smelled like semen and for about a month after that incident, S1 would ingest salt peter, which was something that was given to horses to keep them from being sexually aroused. He would mix the salt peter in a drink to see if he could stop his sexual urges. The embarrassment over getting caught made him feel exposed even though he did not admit to doing anything. To him, he felt that someone finally knew about his masturbation, and it was hard for him to deny at that point.

Getting caught on the chat line put him over the edge. He was on a chat line trying seek this woman, and he got caught by his brother-in-law. His brother-in-law said, “What are you doing on this line?” As soon as S1 heard that, S1 felt a piercing through his heart because he thought, “Finally caught.” He had been caught before, but he always lied. His wife caught him on the chat line before and she found out about some affairs, but when his brother-in-law found out, it felt real to S1 because his secret was no longer within his marriage. It was now in the family, and now the family knew. He thought, “Now everybody knows that I’m going to get exposed.” When it was just between him and his wife, he could maneuver her, lie, manipulate, and control her because he knew she was not going to leave him because of the kids. S1 thought that they could keep his secret between them, but once he was caught by his brother-in-law, he felt exposed because he thought the whole rest of the world would know who he really was.

His middle son looked him in the eye and said, “You know dad, you talk a good ball game, but you’re nothing but an ef – ing hypocrite.” So S1 felt exposed. His son didn’t know that S1 was an addict, but he knew that there was something wrong, so S1 felt exposed by his son and his brother-in-law, and he felt like he couldn’t recover from it.

He planned on killing himself because he knew he was going to get caught, and he knew he could not stop his sexual behaviors, so he felt like his life as he knew it was over and the real him was going to be found out.

Messages from God

As soon as he heard the advertisement for Every Man's Battle, he felt like it was God calling him through the radio.

The third day of Every Man's Battle, during worship, S1 started to open up more, and he heard God say to him, "Why are you still crucifying me?" But he had no idea what that meant. And then it became real to him – His death on the cross. S1 realized that God had forgiven his sins and He wanted to take them upon Himself, but in his addiction, S1 never accepted that forgiveness because he always thought that he was going to hell.

When God said, "Why are you still crucifying me?" he realized he had to surrender all, and he told God, "Okay God, you want me? You got me. Here I am. I'm a liar. I'm a thief. I'm an adulterer. I'm selfish, you name it." He realized he had abandoned God and God never abandoned him, so he just surrendered to God, and he wept, and said, "Here I am. Take me from here wherever we go."

He cried out to God and said, "This doesn't make sense! I could understand this years ago, but not now. I'm sober and I'm better." And God said, "Leave her to me. I will heal her and put her on a path when she is ready. You're responsibility is just to love her."

Feeling that Sexual Addiction was God's Will

S1 is thankful for where he is now and that he went through his addiction journey because God brought him so much closer to Him through the process. He has learned to depend on God and surrender to Him more than ever before because he knows he has to. He feels like he is no longer living his life without a purpose.

Depending on God/Program Daily

Now when S1 has pain, he feels he has to go to God. When he has anxiety or fear or anger or bitterness or resentment, he knows that he can not numb himself with sexual acts because he knows where that takes him, so the only choice he feels he has is to surrender to God and ask Him to expose why he is feeling a certain way and ask for forgiveness, repenting on the spot and asking others to forgive him.

S1 has made many amends and it is a continual process. All the people that he has harmed and wronged, he feels he needs to make right, and that is a continual process in his recovery that he never experienced before.

S1 patterns his day with discipline and focus on God so he does not start reverting to his old behaviors of sexually acting out.

S1 attends accountability groups, and engages in their studies on relationships with their wives. He is heavily involved in his church and with men's groups.

Establishing a Hierarchy in the Marriage

He used to leave the decisions and the religion up to his wife because he stayed in the background and did his own thing, but he is now re-establishing the Godly role that he feels he should play. It is still difficult because his wife was so independent and managed

the family without him. It has been difficult for her to give up some of the roles that she had before because his wife wonders if she can trust him.

S1 was always the leader in the family concerning finances and business decisions because his wife never worked professionally. Engaging with the children was his wife's domain, but he would be the disciplinarian. She would always communicate with the kids, but now it is more of an equal partnership because she involves S1 a lot more with the kids, and she also relies on him a lot more regarding his father role, a role that they felt he always should have played and that she has grown tired of having.

Continued Struggles in Marriage

After returning from Every Man's Battle, S1 looked his wife in the eye and said, "I can't believe what I've done to you. I am so sorry for the man that I have been. If you choose to leave me, I don't blame you, but from this point on, all I'm going to do is try to love you and become the man of God that you deserve." And she said, "Yeah, well, we'll see," and S1 has heard that over and over again.

Many times S1 tried to push his views on his wife. He would tell her, "Hey! I'm sober. Forgive me. Get over it. Let it go. Drop it." He would continue until she would say, "I can't take it anymore."

S1 would tell his wife, "Read this book. Come to church here. Do this, you'll be better," because they still do not share the same faith. He would try to push recovery on her, but she was not ready.

He cried out to God and said, "This doesn't make sense! I could understand this years ago but not now. I'm sober, and I'm better." And God said, "Leave her to me. I will heal her and put her on a path when she is ready. You're responsibility is just to love her." And that is what S1 is trying to do.

His wife still gets angry, and S1 does not believe that his wife will ever fully forgive him, but S1 believes that many men in his situation have lost their wives or their wives may want to pick on every single thing, which eventually can drive the couple apart, so he feels like he has been blessed.

His wife has seen the change, but she wonders if the old S1 is ever coming back, and she is still guarded. She still has her walls, and she protects herself because she does not want to get hurt again.

S2 Situated Narrative

Conflicted Childhood

His mother was in her third marriage, and he discovered in the fifth grade that his father was not his biological father and that distressed him.

Disconnection from Father

His dad adopted him, and S2's biological father had left. S2 has a relationship with his biological father now, but, at that time, it was a huge hole in his heart that he was not aware of, but he was angry.

In his senior year of high school, his mom and dad divorced and his dad separated from the family, and it got harder for S2 to connect with his father. He was away in college, and there was a greater expectation on his father to make time for the younger siblings. It was not as much of an expectation for his father to connect with S2, and neither one of them made the time for each other for a couple of years.

Initial Sexual Exploration & Action

S2 felt that his sexual addiction started in his teenage years because he used to consistently pursue girls.

He was very active sexually. He had multiple sexual partners as a teenager in relationships, sometimes long-term, sometimes short-term, and when he went to college, he was still promiscuous and sexually engaged in multiple liaisons.

Using Sex or Relationships as a Way to Feel Affirmed

The sexual relationships he had were part of S2's identity as a man.

As S2 moved from woman to woman or conquest to conquest, it helped him identify as a man momentarily.

In high school, there were eight cheerleaders on the squad and S2 was captain of the football team, and he knew that he had slept with x percent of the cheerleaders, and that made him feel good because it helped him to identify as a man.

He would never *talk* about his sexual conquests, but he thought that they made him a man.

In his marriage, when things were good between him and his wife, he would feel good about himself.

A relationship with a woman that would ultimately lead to a sexual event between them would affirm him.

Guilt over Sexual Acts Due to Faith

Masturbation was always something that was a part of S2's life, and it was one of those things that he always felt badly about doing. In his heart, he knew that it was wrong, but he got messages from his secular surroundings that it was perfectly healthy and normal.

S2 felt guilty about masturbation growing up due to his Christian upbringing, and he always thought it was terrible and wrong. At some point in time, he came across the Bible verse about the lineage of Christ where someone had spilled his seed on the ground and God was not happy with that. That was always in his mind throughout his life so there was often a sense of guilt.

Separating Married Life from Sexual Life

He had suppressed the past memories of his sexual behaviors, and no one knew about his sexual escapades because he was in the military and they often changed stations. S2's behavior was always a private thing for him, and nobody knew about his sexual world.

He did not fully disclose everything about his past sexual behaviors the first time he confessed to his wife. He only disclosed something that happened ten years earlier.

Separating Religious Life from Sexual Life

He and his wife would fight all the way to church and then he would open the car door while saying, "Hey brother, how you doing?" In front of others, he would often smile and act like nothing was wrong.

He would try to control everything he could about his life even though, being an evangelical Christian, he felt that he should surrender to God. He felt like surrendering to God was not within his realm of possibility, so he never considered it. Instead he would try to control his sexual behaviors, and his entire life became about repentance and not about joy. His worship was all about, "I am so sorry."

Reaction Formation Parallel

Men at church started asking him to have coffee after church, and they would tell him about the extra-marital relationships they had. As S2 was trying to counsel these men, he was consistently reminded about his sexual behaviors, realizing that relationships were still a problem for him because he still wanted to cross boundaries with women that he knew he should not cross.

Because S2 had so much turmoil in other places, he strove for perfection wherever he could. He was a "control freak" because he could not control his sexual urges, and so he had the tendency to over-control everything else.

S2 felt like his daily life had to be perfect, and he would get angry with anything that was not perfect because that was the only way he could maintain control. He would become controlling about things, and if something was not working to his standards then he became angry.

Asking God to Change Him

He would ask God, “God, what don’t you do those things in me [and] make me more viable in this marriage life?”

S2 would tell God, “I don’t want this. I don’t want this lifestyle. Take it away from me. I’m taking it to my grave. There’s no way I’m telling my wife. Take this from me.” He lived a life of daily crying out to God for forgiveness about the affair and about who he was as a person.

S2 would often plead with God throughout his sexual acting out.

S2 prayed to God in his hotel room during a business trip when a woman wanted him to come over to see her, and he knew he should not go. He would pray God, “God, I don’t want to go over. I don’t want to go over there,” but then he would go over there. After he left the woman, he would feel remorseful, repentant, and torn.

S2 would feel terrible about himself until he ultimately become very upset with God for making him this way. When he would cry out to God, it would be out of shame and guilt and wanting to be forgiven. S2 wanted to be changed.

At night or in his hotel room, he’d be crying out to God, “I’m so sorry, and I’m so angry, and I’m so sorry and I’m so angry. Why am I this person? I want to be a righteous man. I want to be a good husband, and I want to be a good father, and I can’t.”

Negative Feelings about God

S2 was mostly angry at God for making him this way with a personality that was attractive to others and his need to always be the fun guy. His need to have a woman affirm him and his inability to feel okay about himself without having sex were also points of contention he had with God. He would wonder, why did you make me this way?

No Help from Church

S2 felt that his preacher has no clue how to help him. He went to him and told him his story, and his preacher said, “I don’t know what to do. I don’t want to judge you,” and S2 did not know what to do.

S2 knew that there was material out there about sexual addiction, but no one knew about it in church. His church friends would often come to him because they trusted him and did not know where to turn, and he would tell them what to read to learn about sexual addiction.

S2 felt that there was a tremendous amount of data about sexual addiction, but no one had put it together for people in his situation.

Feeling that Marriage Would Solve Problems

There was always some thought in the back of his mind that when he got married, he would not be promiscuous anymore because he was someone that thought a promise is a

promise and that promises needed to be kept. To him, marriage was a promise and a commitment and serious business.

Initial Trouble In Marriage

S2's high school sweetheart became pregnant and got an abortion, and he suffered from post-abortive issues.

He met the one who became his wife. They had a relationship that was physical, and she became pregnant so they got married. It was difficult on S2 because he left college and went into the military, and it was tough leaving.

In some ways, he thought that he would be instantly cured from all of his baggage and issues, but it did not happen in his marriage, and he had some resentment because his wife was able to stop her sexual behaviors when they got married while he still struggled with sexual urges and acting out.

S2 got married because his girlfriend got pregnant, they loved each other, but they got married because they wanted to do the right thing, and the right thing was not to have an abortion and for them to have the child. S2 understood that he could still be a father and not necessarily be married, but that was never anything that they wanted because they wanted to do the right thing as best as they could. Ultimately, S2 had some resentment about being married in this way.

There was a lot of different emotional baggage for S2 and his wife, everything from family dynamics to their own issues to his wife growing up in an alcoholic household.

They both loved each other and it did not feel like anything forced. They knew each other about eight months before they got married. Shortly after, S2 went into the military. Life was tough, life was great, it was up and down all the time with them, but in his personal life and in his inner self, S2 felt like there was always a struggle.

Ongoing Trouble in Marriage

He was committed to his religious faith but had this great struggle going on in his life around his marriage in addition to having allowed the affair to happen.

S2 did not fully surrender to his marriage. He was not always actively promiscuous, but he was unsure of whether he would stay in the marriage.

S2 and his wife were not getting along and were bickering a lot, and S2 did not feel close to his wife.

S2 had a lot of anger, partly because of the woman that had started e-mailing him again and would not quit. Because S2 did not come clean about his sexual e-mail affair to his wife, he had anger about that.

S2's wife would often ask him, "How could you?" and he had no answers for her or for himself.

S2 and his wife sought counseling a couple of different times for marriage issues, but it was not entirely helpful. It was helpful with some marriage issues.

When their marriage was extremely problematic, they were going to a Christian counselor.

They were meeting with a counselor regularly. After the other affair, S2 went back and told his counselor about it, and his counselor said, "I knew something like this was going to happen," and it was very frustrating for S2, and he got very upset with the counselor. He thought, "If you felt this way and you're the professional, why didn't you break it down and say, 'Hey, you guys got to get real'?"

The marriage counselor felt that something was extremely problematic in the marriage because there was so much pain, but when S2 and his wife would sit down and the counselor would ask them questions, they would respond in a way that seemed disingenuous. S2 thought they were working on their marriage and so did his wife, yet the counselor thought that there was hidden turmoil between the couple.

S2 thought it was going well in counseling, and S2 was upset because the counselor felt that there was an undercurrent, but he did not tell them about it until after S2 told his counselor about his second affair.

He would get home, and the daily responsibilities like tending to their daughter would cause stress between him and his wife. They would argue a lot about things like the household.

S2 would be angry and have angry thoughts about his wife. He would think, "Why can't she just leave me alone? Why this? Why that? Nag, nag, nag."

Initial Role Confusion about Being a Spiritual Leader

S2's wife would expect things from him as a husband, father, or head of the household, and they would fight.

S2 was a very young Christian, and his wife wanted someone to be a strong spiritual leader for the family, and he was not that at that time, and so that caused tension for them.

S2's wife felt that he was not meeting the expectations of being a spiritual leader of the family, so she would lose respect for him.

There was no concept of unconditional respect or love for either S2 or his wife during their early marriage. It would be a vicious cycle because she didn't respect him, he wouldn't love her, and that would lead to strain that would lead to sexual tension.

S2 felt that his wife wanted him to be a spiritual leader even though she did not say, “I want you to be a spiritual leader.” Instead, she would say, “Why can’t you do this?” or “Why can’t you do that?” or “Why do you always have to fight me?”

S2 was young but was always expected to be a leader in his marriage, and he did not feel he could. He could never quote the books of the Bible yet he knew that they were the foundation within any Christian upbringing. So, he had no idea what it was to be a spiritual leader.

S2’s wife had thoughts about the type of lifestyle in which S2 would be the father and the spiritual head of the family, but S2 had no knowledge about that because his mom was always the spiritual person in his upbringing. S2 would support his family financially, but his wife would deal with the finances, and that would always be a conflict because she wanted him to manage the finances as well.

Using Sexuality or Fantasy as a Way to Cope

For him, the addiction was not about imagery but about relationships, and when he struggled with his wife, arguing and having fights, he would feel really disconnected. This is when S2 would have sexual thoughts, and his mind would go to places that he did not want it to go.

S2 and his wife were having marital problems in early 2004, and he had another affair.

S2 had frustrations and stress over work issues. S2 had a mental conversation going on inside his head thinking that his wife did not love him and that he was in a terrible place. As S2 was getting ready to leave for his work’s corporate offices where they were going to lay off several of his team members, he was not feeling good, and he and his wife got into a big argument as he was packing to leave. During the argument, she said, “I hate you,” and S2 continued to replay that statement in his mind. That experience initiated S2’s second affair. S2 left for work and he kept hearing, “I hate you. I hate you. I hate you,” and in his mind, he would hear, “I hate you. You’re a loser. You’re a terrible father.” At that point, there was a woman there who tried to console him, and he had a sexual affair with her.

When S2’s wife would expect things from him as a husband, father, or head of the household, they would fight. Because S2 would have a wife that was bickering with him all the time, he would find comfort in another woman that would want to talk to him and spend time with him and not bicker with him or harass him, and it ultimately led him to having some sexual experiences with her.

S2 had to lay off a group of his co-workers and before he left, he and his wife got into a big fight, she said, “I hate you,” and he took that to mean, “You’re a failure, and I hate you.” After laying his co-workers off, he walked out the door and there was this woman with a coffee and a shoulder to cry on, and that led him to his second affair.

Once his wife went to Scotland for 10 days, and S2 just hoped that she would find a man there that would make her happy. He would think, “Won’t the kids be better off? – maybe I got to live in some apartment or something but won’t they be better off, won’t they be happier, won’t I be happier?”, and these kinds of thoughts continued for four or five months.

Guilt over Sexual Acting Out During Marriage

Because of S2’s evangelical faith, his sexual behavior would end up bringing about guilt and shame because he wanted to be righteous and to be a good husband and father.

Even though S2 confessed to his wife about the past affair, the e-mail sexual correspondence with his wife’s friend was kept in the dark, and it caused him guilt, shame, and anger.

S2 would consistently be surprised when he would ultimately have an affair with a woman. He did not want it to happen, and he would ask himself why he would let that happen and how it got out of control.

After he left the woman, he would feel so remorseful, repentant, and torn.

Exposure Causing S to Confess

S2’s wife came downstairs to his home office, and he was talking to the woman he had an affair with, although he had broken it off with her prior to this event. S2’s wife came downstairs and said, “What’s going on?” Although there was nothing going on at the time, S2 felt he was being deceitful and he felt “static” all around him.

When his wife came down, she sat down in front of the computer and pulled up all these sexual e-mails that S2 had never even seen because they were being filtered, and she was reading all his sexual e-mails from this woman. S2 felt a like a “flaming sword of righteousness” when through him, like a spiritual battle was going on around him. He felt like the air was thick and felt God say, “Enough’s enough.” S2 felt like a sword or a flame of righteousness pierced his heart and yanked all his sin out of him. S2 felt like that was his day of reckoning. From that day he started his journey of recovery and healing, and S2 confessed to his wife.

Messages from God

As the men continued to tell S2 about their inappropriate relationships and things that they had going on S2 thought God was saying, “You know, you have a lot to offer here with your story, and I’m going to use you, but you still have a lot of cleaning up to do, and you got a lot of things to come out with, and you need to get your marriage right.”

When his wife came down the stairs and asked him who he was talking to, it caused a quickening in his heart and body. He felt electricity in the air, and he felt like something supernatural was going on. He felt that this moment was the climactic moment for them.

S2's wife said, "Who are you on the phone with? What's going on?" and he could not move. He pushed his chair back and could not breathe. She pulled the sexual e-mails up and started reading them. At that moment, he realized that this was the woman he loved and that she was his gift from God, and he felt like a dagger went through him like a red hot flame and sucked his sin out.

On the day his wife confronted him about the sexual e-mails, S2 felt God's hand.

S2's wife told him that she did not know how she managed to find the sexual e-mails. She felt directed. She was 100% driven by the spirit of God to achieve that. She was directed by the Holy Spirit to expose the situation and deal with it with her husband.

Depending on God/Program Daily

S2 felt that he and his wife now have true worship with God in their sexual life because the intimacy with his wife is about worshipping God. While the need to meet one another's physical needs and desires is substantial and can be at the forefront at times, there are often moments when sex is just pure worship, and that was never there before for them.

S2 stopped going to SA meetings and started to have a "don't care attitude", and he relapsed (masturbating) because he had not been going to meetings. He confessed to his wife about his masturbating, and quit the behavior, and he has been trying to get in touch with SA to restart the program.

Establishing a Hierarchy in the Marriage

S2's role is developing as the head of the household, but the couple continues to have some disagreements about specific solutions.

S2 and his wife continue to struggle with role conflicts. His wife desires to be taken care of and to be protected, and sometimes he gets it right, and sometimes he gets it wrong, but they continue to work on it.

S2 feels that his marriage is an equal partnership but that there are definite hierarchical Biblical roles. He feels that his role is spiritual leadership, and the main part of that is to love his wife and provide spiritual guidance, but it is difficult for him to explain the nature of this role. Mainly he understands that he needs to be sensitive to his wife and understand when she is in a tough situation and to take her by the hand when she is really stressed and say, "Let's give this to God," and to be open to what God is trying to tell him.

S2 understands that women who are righteous follow God and respect their husbands, and that God intends him to be the spiritual head of his family while his wife is his partner.

S2 feels like he is still working out his exact role as a spiritual leader and is learning to live in that place of imperfection and work on it, realizing that he may only have everything all figured out when he gets to heaven.

Continued Struggles in Marriage

S2 feels that things are fantastic in his marriage, but they still have their rough days.

S3 Situated Narrative

Conflicted Childhood

As a child, S3's opinion didn't matter. It never mattered what he wanted to do as long as the dishes were done, as long as dinner was put on the table, and as long as the place did not look like a mess then things were fine and his mom would act lovingly towards him, but when things were not like that, she was emotionally abusive.

S3's mother was very emotionally abusive, and she would use guilt as a way to get what she needed from him. Growing up, he learned that love is earned and to escape thinking about it, he would fantasize about sexual matters.

S3's mom told him that his father was heavily into pornography.

Disconnection from Father

At a very early age, S3 could remember that family life was not the best. His dad was a member of the family but was not involved with the family.

S3's father was irresponsible and not involved with the family.

His father left when S3 was really young, about eight or nine years old.

S3 did not know whether his father was asked to leave the house. He suspected his mom kicked his dad out, but his mom would not tell him.

In between when his dad left and high school, there was very little contact between S3 and his dad. When S3 was a junior in high school, his dad would call every now and then and he and his brothers would go over to visit.

S3 and his dad were never close. As a teenager, if he never saw his dad again, it would have been just fine with him.

When S3's dad became a born again Christian, S3 thought, "Pff, well good for him because he needs some order in his life or something. At least he's doing something right."

Initial Sexual Exploration & Action

S3 started dating a girl in college, and that was the first time he had sex.

While he was dating a girl in college, S3 would go to college parties and bring home a stranger and had casual sex.

Guilt over Sexual Acts Due to Faith

He became a Christian after his junior year in college while he was still dating his girlfriend, and he knew that pre-marital sex was going to be an issue for them since they were already having sex. He knew how much he liked doing it, but he knew that it was

wrong. He thought, “I’m going to marry this girl anyway, so it doesn’t really matter, or I’ll just pray about it.” But the sex continued and so did the guilt.

His girlfriend lived with him in his apartment for three weeks when he was very active in the church, and he was very uncomfortable with that because he knew it was wrong because at this time his faith was really building. He thought, “This is wrong. We shouldn’t be doing this,” and was very uncomfortable with the fact that she was there. Three weeks later her girlfriend moved down and they moved to an apartment, and he was very thankful. He loved his girlfriend dearly, but he thought, “She can’t live here right now, it’s not right.”

He felt guilty about viewing online pornography, and he felt that that way because of the Bible verse, “He who looks upon a woman with lust has already committed adultery in his heart,” so he felt guilty.

He used to pump gas in the summer, and pretty girls were everywhere, and he knew that looking at them and desiring them sexually was wrong, and he thought the answer would be to talk to one of the elders at his church.

He knew that lusting after women was a problem. He had started going to church and was becoming very active, but he still had this problem with lust. He thought, “I have to deal with this. I’m going to get married next year. This is a problem.”

Preoccupation with Sexual Behavior Resulting in it Becoming a Substantial Part of Life

There would be days where he would call in sick just so he could stay home and browse the internet for pornography. It was never enough and he was constantly searching and searching and getting sucked in. It started to get very consuming.

There would be times when he would get up around two-thirty in the morning while his wife was sleeping and he would spend an hour or two on the computer viewing pornography.

He would start browsing on the internet when his wife was not home or when she had gone to bed.

S3 would spend a large amount of his time at work downloading pornography.

He would see icons for Sport Illustrated swimsuit calendar and would click on that picture and pretty girls with skimpy bikinis came up, and he thought, “Uh, that’s nice,” and he wanted to view more and more images. Next thing he knew, he was searching for those images on the internet. He was not sure how long it took him to get started back into that, but he felt like it was not very long.

He started browsing the internet at home again even though he got fired from his job for downloading pornography at work. He told himself, “You know what? I learned a lesson.

I'm done. I can not do this anymore. I just lost a job because of it. I'm done." That lasted about a week and a half before he was browsing the internet at home again.

He would always know his wife's schedule the day before or a couple of days before, so he would know when she would be out of the house, and so he would set time aside for computer use. Mostly it was just waiting for her to go to bed because that was when he would do most of his acting out, at night time, and he would also do it a lot at work.

Separating Married Life from Sexual Life

S3's wife never knew that he was going on the computer to view pornography sites, but she started to suspect.

They went to see a marriage counselor after eight years of being married, but they never talked about the problem. It was always about errors in communication. They talked about how they were not communicating or talking to each other correctly or empathically. They never addressed his problem with pornography and his disconnection from his wife.

There would be a couple of times where his wife would catch him viewing online pornography at night, and he would say, "Okay, I'm going to quit. I'm embarrassed. You're absolutely right," and there would be a huge argument, but he was thinking, "I'm not harming anybody. I'm not going out and having an affair. I'm not harming anybody," because he did not see that it was harming his marriage.

He felt like he still had control of his life, and he was able to keep those two lives separate because he had to be responsible, he had to go to work, and he had to take care of his son, so that was why he thought he could control this. He thought he was still in control because his behavior had not consumed him to the point where all was lost, he was not in jail. He did not see it as a problem because he did not see the effect that it had on others.

Separating Religious Life from Sexual Life

S3 would study for exams or do his homework so that he did not have to think about his guilt over having pre-marital sex. When he went to bed at night, he would turn the TV on really low so he was not left alone with his thoughts and he just had to hear the TV. Things like that would help him avoid thinking about what he was doing was wrong and provided an escape from any kind of self-reflection. He would do anything so he did not have to be quiet because when it was quiet then he would start thinking about all the things that made him feel guilty, and he felt stress and guilt.

S3 would have sex with his girlfriend on the weekends. At the time, he was not going to church. He would still read the Bible, but he was not involved in any kind of fellowship for two years, so he did not feel guilty about having pre-marital sex with his girlfriend because he had fallen away from the church for a time.

His girlfriend lived with him in his apartment for three weeks when he was very active in the church, and he was very uncomfortable with that because he knew it was wrong because at this time his faith was growing again. He thought, “This is wrong. We shouldn’t be doing this,” and was very uncomfortable with the fact that she was there. Three weeks later her girlfriend moved down and they moved to an apartment, and he was very thankful. He loved his girlfriend dearly, but he thought, “She can’t live here right now, it’s not right,” but they continued to have sex, not often, but it would happen.

He would ask himself how he could justify going to church, and being a youth leader in the youth ministry and still having pre-marital sex. He knew it was wrong, but he did it anyway.

While S3 was viewing pornography on the computer on a regular basis, he was also going to church regularly.

He would not think about his pornography use, and he still prayed, still went to church, and still did youth activities, and he did not think about that sexual part of his life. He had this life over here then he had the other life over here. When he was involved in the church life and the social life, he did not think about his sexual acting out life, but then, when it got dark outside, and everyone went to bed, he tended to his sexual needs with pornography, and he did not think about his religious life. He kept them separate.

He was not angry that God did not take his sexual struggles away and he did no blame God. Instead, he thought, “I just won’t think about it. I’ll continue to go to church on Sundays. I’ll go through the motions.”

Reaction Formation Parallel

Lust was still problematic for him, but he went to church every Sunday. He went to Bible study every Wednesday night and to two services on Sunday, a Sunday morning and a Sunday evening. He joined a men’s fellowship on Tuesday mornings, and they met around six o’clock before work. He did all the outward appearance of things, but internally he had a problem with lust, and he was not dealing with that on a spiritual level. He was really an active church member while all his sexual acting out was going on.

Because he was going to church and was engaged in a lot of religious things, he thought that he must be a good person.

For a while, he taught Sunday school during his active addiction. He also led a junior church where he would have second through sixth grade kids, and once a month while the adults were upstairs having their service, he would lead a service with the kids.

Asking God to Change Him

He would pray, “God, take this away. God, take this away. God, take this away.” And He never did. “Take this lust away. Take this lust away.” He never did.

Using the Relationship with God as a Rationalization to Continue or Increase Behavior

He became a Christian after his junior year in college while he was still dating his girlfriend, and he knew that pre-marital sex was going to be an issue with them since they were already having sex. He knew how much he liked doing it, but he knew that it was wrong, so he would think, “I’m going to marry this girl anyway, so it doesn’t really matter, or he’d just pray about it,” but the sex continued, and he felt guilty.

S3 believed that he could not lose his salvation. He thought that once you’re saved, you’re saved. He believed that there was nothing you could do to lose your salvation, but you could lose spiritual blessings. S3 relied on that belief to deal with his sexual behavior because he would think, “That’s okay, I’m saved.”

When S3 would participate in a sexual act he thought was wrong, he would think, “I’ll just pray about this later.”

When he realized that praying and reading his Bible more was not working to minimize his lust, he learned to separate his sexual desires from his religious life. He thought that he must be doing something wrong or that he could not fix the problem.

When he was in church, he would pray, “God, please forgive me that I viewed pornography this week. Please forgive me that I lusted, and please forgive me,” and he felt that he was always washed clean of his sin. Every Sunday, he was washed clean, and in the back of his mind, he was thinking, “I know I’m going to pray this next week.”

No Help from Church

He knew that lusting after women was a problem. He started going to church and was becoming very active, but he still had this problem with lust. He thought, “I have to deal with this. I’m going to get married next year. This is a problem.” So, he went to one of the elders at his church and told him what the problem was: “I see a pretty girl, I got to look. It’s lust. I see a pretty girl, and I got to look. I got to look. What do I do? What is the answer?” The elder looked at him and said, “Son, I’m 75 years old and I still have that problem. All you got to do is you got to pray more. You got to read your Bible more.” He did. He prayed more and read his Bible more, and it did not seem to work. It was not helpful at all for him.

He prayed, he read the Bible every night, and he joined a men’s accountability group, but none of that worked for him because he was still lusting.

He thought he was doing the right thing with praying, reading his Bible, and the church activities, and he thought that if he continued to do these things then lust would not be a problem anymore. He thought he was doing everything right, but it just was not working.

Feeling that Marriage Would Solve Problems

He thought after he got married, he would have sex all the time so he would not have to act out sexually. He thought, “I’d be legit, and I’d quit.”

Unrealistic Expectations about Sex

Because he and his wife were married and they slept next to each other, he thought it was just natural to have sex every night. Every night would be fine with him, and when they did not have sex, he thought there was something wrong with that. They started growing apart emotionally because he was so physically-centered and self-centered, thinking about his wants and his desires and not thinking about hers.

Initial Trouble in Marriage

He used to witness to his wife who was not a born-again Christian all the time and it became a source of argument. She would ask him to stop, and eventually, he just stopped.

The primary issue was always that he was not a leader in the family.

His wife had a self-esteem issue and did not work with a counselor to address the issue until 17 years into their marriage.

Ongoing Trouble in Marriage

His wife would say, "You know, we would have sex more often if you would just tell me what you were thinking. Just share." So for a week, he would share, "Oh it was a bad week at work today," or "Oh, maybe we should do this," and when sex did not happen over the weekend, he would get mad, thinking, "Hey, I fulfilled my end of the bargain!"

His wife found out that he was viewing pornography sites and confronted him about it, and he was livid and scared at first because he had shame about spending hours on a computer, and he felt guilty about his actions. He thought, "What right do you have to do this?" and it caused further separation between them.

After a few of years into their marriage, the decreased sex between him and his wife started to become a source of contention. S3 would bring it up and they would have minor arguments, and it got to the point where he thought that it was not worth arguing over because he believed she was not going to change anything.

Blaming Wife

After about two or three years, sex became less and less frequent, and S3 was unhappy with that, so he would blame his wife for his pornography problem. He thought, "Well, if you would just put out more, I wouldn't have to resort to this."

He started to get more resentful and angry that sex was not happening, so he thought, "Fine, I'll get it somewhere else, and it'll be your fault. We're married, and this should be happening regularly, and it's not, so fine. I'll get it somewhere else, and it'll be your fault," and that was when he started going to the computer to look at pornography.

He thought, "Once we start having sex, I'll stop. I won't have a need to get on the computer."

He used the computer to blame her because he thought if things were better in the bedroom, he wouldn't have to resort to using pornography.

Initial Role Confusion about Being a Spiritual Leader

His wife expected him to be the head of the house. She would plan everything, and he did not plan anything, and that was very problematic for her because he was a follower and not a leader. She wanted a man, and she felt he was not a man.

He didn't see himself as being a non-participatory, but his wife always planned things. She planned the vacations. She took care of all the bills or if things needed done around the house. He was a follower, so he never initiated anything, and that became a big problem between him and his wife.

S3 felt like he was not a husband in a spiritual sense. He was not the head of the household. He was not the spiritual leader. He was not the person that his wife could come home to and rely on and depend on, and that was a big problem for her.

Very often, he would get defensive when she brought up the fact that she always had to tell him what needed to be done. If she said, "Hey, can you throw a load of laundry in?" that never bothered him, but he became defensive when she said, "Why must I always tell you what to do? Why must I always plan things? Why can't you do this?"

Using Sexuality or Fantasy as a Way to Cope

S3 found his father's pornography magazines, and he thought, "Wow!" The pornography magazines were a good escape from the realities of the things that were happening in his home.

For S3, viewing pornography and engaging in sexual fantasy were ways of not having to think and of avoiding self-reflection.

Growing up, he learned that love was earned, and to escape that he would create sexual fantasies in his head.

Guilt over Sexual Acting Out During Marriage

He felt guilty about viewing online pornography because it was wrong, and he understood felt that way because of the Bible verse, "He who looks upon a woman with lust has already committed adultery in his heart," so he felt guilty.

Exposure Causing S to Confess and Try to Change

There were times when S3 would get caught viewing online pornography by his wife, and he would swear it off, telling her that he would not do this again and then come up with so many strategies to stop acting out like going to bed when his wife went to bed so that she would know that he was not on the computer viewing pornography. He would tell himself that he would not touch the computer when she was not home.

S3 thought he hit his bottom when he lost his job because he was browsing the internet for pornography.

When he lost his job, he realized he had a problem.

His wife found out that he was viewing pornography sites and confronted him about it, and he was livid and scared at first because he had shame about spending hours on a computer, and he felt guilty about that.. He thought, “What right do you have to do this?” and it caused further separation between them. He said, “You know, okay, I’ll stop. You’re absolutely right. I’ll just stop. I just won’t view pornography anymore.” Because he knew it wrong because it was lust and lust was wrong. So he would stop for a week, and then he would sneak away and act out, and it continued to be a problem.

He started browsing the internet at home again even though he got fired from his job for downloading pornography at work. He told himself, “You know what? I learned a lesson. I’m done. I can not do this anymore. I just lost a job because of it. I’m done.” That lasted about a week and a half before he was browsing the internet at home again. His wife caught him, and she looked at him and said, “You get help, or you’re out of here, and you’ll never see your son again.” So the very next day, he went to his new job and he looked up “sex addiction,” e-mailed SA, and asked for help. He explained a little bit about what is going on. Wednesday, he got a reply that there was a meeting Thursday, and he went to the meeting Thursday.

Messages from God

S3’s dad picked him up to go to church and when they did the altar call, S3 felt the Holy Spirit strike him, and he looked at his dad and said, “Man, what a fool I am,” and he walked down the aisle with his father who held his hand.

Feeling that Sexual Addiction was God’s Will

At the time, his prayers were, “God take this away. Take this away. God, take this away,” and God never did, and S3 thinks that there was a reason for that. He believes that God purposely did not take S3’s sexual desires away because it made S3 join a fellowship where he has grown closer to God. He thinks that if he did not have his addiction then he would think he had no need for God.

Depending on God/Program Daily

S3 gets up every morning and does his morning meditations. He sets his phone for 12:12 because he lives by the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. When his phone alarm goes off at 12:12, he turns the lights off in his office, turns the computer screen off, tells the secretary to hold the calls, and for ten minutes, he sits and prays. Before he goes to bed at night, he has a nightly reading, and it is because of his addiction that S3 feels he has grown much closer to God.

When S3 thinks about sexual thoughts, he feels he has to rely on God, and a couple of times a day he prays because he thinks about his sexual struggles now. He feels his faith has grown stronger because of his addiction.

He went to the SA international conference last year, and once he got back, he started saving again to go this year.

Establishing a Hierarchy in the Marriage

He did not see himself as being a non-participatory, but his wife always planned things. She planned the vacations. She took care of all the bills or if things needed done around the house. He was a follower, so he never initiated anything, and that became a big problem between him and his wife. It is something that they are still trying to work out.

Now he makes sure he leads the family in prayers at dinner time. He and his son always talk about God and Jesus, and S3 tries to always talk about those things when his wife is present. He attempts to pray with her at night and to do devotions with her. She is uncomfortable with it, but he has initiated those things, to do the devotions with her and to talk about spiritual things.

Continued Struggles in Marriage

Things are better in the marriage, but they still continue to be involved in marriage counseling.

They continue to work on issues about S3's being a follower and the lack of trust in their marriage. His wife does not feel she can be vulnerable with him for fear of being hurt because she is afraid of being let down again. Those are the things that they are addressing now in their therapy.

He attempts to pray with her at night and to do devotions with her. She is uncomfortable with it.

Conflicted Childhood

As a young boy under the age of ten, he grew up in a family where his parents hated each other. They were constantly fighting. While he knew that his mother loved him very much and his father cared for him, his parents did not care for each other and family life from his earliest memories was devastating for S4. It was constant yelling, demeaning, anger, and S4 felt like it was an awful situation.

It was a very difficult childhood where he was desperately seeking love, care, and affection.

Because of his family situation, he believed that he was inadequate and that he was alone because he felt as if he was the only one in the world who was experiencing this hell in his home.

As a little kid, he was the pawn between his mother and father during their divorce and was constantly a subject of bargaining throughout the custody proceedings in the court system.

Disconnection from Father

S4 did not see his father since he was ten or eleven, and it was a complete separation. His parents had a terrible break-up, and out of respect for his mom who sacrificed everything, he did not want a relationship with his dad, and his dad did some things back then to try to make S4's mother look like a bad mother through the custody proceeding, and he had a hard time forgiving him for it.

He had a hard time forgiving his dad for what he tried to do when S4 felt his mother was the only one who was trying to help him, and he felt his father only wanted him out of spite for her.

Initial Sexual Exploration & Action

He wanted to be connected to a relationship, and he wanted to have sex. He had the pornographic magazines so he wanted to experience sex. In his junior year of high school, he started to date a girl, and she was willing so they started to engage in sex as teenagers. They did not have that many opportunities, but every opportunity that they could get, they tried, and they engaged in sex and a relationship for a number of years. They would always look for opportunities to engage in sex and other kinds of touching activities.

Using Sex or Relationships as a Way to Feel Affirmed

As a child, he was hooked on pornographic images of women because they gave him a sense of the unconditional love that he so desperately desired.

He wanted to be adequate, worthy, loved, unafraid, and feel secure, and when he found those magazines, they gave him that sense of security.

Guilt over Sexual Acts Due to Faith

As a young kid, even in the early stages of his pornography use, he felt an overall sense of remorse and guilt over the acting out simply because he knew he was doing this for a reason other than what would be called normal. He did not identify his sexual behavior as wrong, but he knew it was secretive.

He knew having sex was not right, and he knew that his beliefs said that he should not be doing this. He already lost his virginity, and he thought “I’m not supposed to do that until I get married.” It was the constant nature of wanting sex badly and pursuing it and, at the same time, experiencing a momentary relief and pleasure which then gave way to more guilt and remorse.

He would seek to act out for relief, pleasure, for that high, that hit, but after the momentary release, he would feel crushing remorseful guilt because of his Christian beliefs and his own intellectual understanding that this was not regular behavior. The feeling would be, “I’m not a good Christian, I’m not a good person, I’m a liar, abnormal, I’ve got a messed up life.”

Preoccupation with Sexual Behavior Resulting in it Becoming a Substantial Part of Life

He would try to find pornographic magazines anywhere he could. He would secretly go into stores when he was a little bit older and would buy magazines and hide them.

When his wife was away, he would drive to a little thrift store and would buy pornographic magazines in a place where nobody knew him. They would visit his wife’s parents and he would go out and tell her he was going to run a couple of errands, and he would go into one of these shops and buy magazines, and he would hide them to use them later. He was constantly trying to find these pornographic images so that he could use them to act out and it got to be progressively more frequent.

When he was away from home, he would have free access to internet pornography, and his addiction progressively grew. He would wake up in the morning and think, “When can I find my opportunity where I can have that kind of alone time where I can connect online?” The level he attained was never enough, and he always wanted something more.

The pornographic images started not to be enough, and so he started to go out and to look for women, and he did that through engaging in the romance chat rooms. He would talk online with hundreds of women across the country, which resulted in dozens of cyber-sex relationships, talking sexually with each other until they each reached climax through masturbation.

In college, his girlfriend broke up with him after he told her about this other girl he was dating at the same time. S4 felt like he should have broken up with the other girl too, but he was a senior, and he felt he could not let her go, so he proposed to her, just like he

proposed to the other girl because he wanted to hold on to that sexual connection, he didn't want to lose it.

After he broke up with his fiancée, he was not attached, and he was looking for someone else to have as a girlfriend where he could get sex.

Any type of sexual activity that S4 engaged in was one that he did not want to lose, whether it was pornography, magazines, or women. Any sexual connection he had with a woman, he wanted to maintain at any cost whether he would lie or propose marriage. He would do anything to keep that connection. Even with the affair he had, he would say, "Yes, I'm going to divorce my wife," anything he could do to keep that sexual outlet, he would do.

Sex with his girlfriend was not enough because he was pursuing sex with other women in college, and the masturbation and pornography continued along with that. He had pornographic magazines in his apartment regularly because he had the time alone where he could do what he wanted. He was alone with no accountability to anybody, and his sexual behavior was constant. The more he had sex with women, the more he wanted it and the more it would lead to further desire to sexually act out.

Separating Married Life from Sexual Life

When his wife was away, he would drive to a little thrift store and would buy pornographic magazines in a place where nobody knew him. They would visit his wife's parents and he would go out and tell her he was going to run a couple of errands, and he would go into one of these shops and buy magazines, and he would hide them to use them later.

He would tell his wife, "Hey honey, I got to stay. I have to work late tonight," and he would stay up and be on the internet. He would get up in the morning early and he would tell her, "I just have to do some more work before I go to work," and he would be on the internet.

Primarily, he would call women when he was on the road and he would engage in phone sex relationships with dozens of women.

After he and his wife got married, he continued to masturbate frequently to pornographic images in magazines, which he kept hidden.

He started disclosing some of the details about his addiction to his wife but he was not going into a lot of the detail of the affair because he was trying to hold on to the affair.

After living away for two to three months, he came home to his wife even though, at the same time, he was keeping his affair going. His wife knew about the affair, but she thought that it was over.

Their marriage counselor knew about the affair, but he did not know S4 was continuing it. He thought S4 was home with his wife and everything was over.

He had been lying to his wife even after he came home again and said, “Everything is fine. Everything will be better now.”

Separating Religious Life from Sexual Life

The person that everyone knew was the perfect husband, father, student, and later in life worship-leader and elder. People thought, “What a great guy,” and he had his extra-marital sexual life hidden.

He would continue to go to church with his family as he was having an affair with another woman.

Nobody knew anything at church. To them, they were the perfect family.

Nobody knew him as anything other than a perfect guy, a good Christian, a good father and dad, and someone who professed and believed in the Lord as his savior. But he had this hidden sin, and he harbored it and kept it secret for all of his life.

Reaction Formation Parallel

The person that everyone knew was the perfect husband, father, student, and later in life worship-leader and elder.

He was very involved in the church. He always wanted to be the person that followed the right road that was an exemplary person and an exemplary Christian, but at the same time, he was addicted to pornography.

The person that he was on the outside to others in the church was the person he always wanted to be, so the person he wanted to be was the person he would be on the outside, but he felt like he was a slave to sin in his private, hidden life.

Asking God to Change Him

He was never mad at God, but he was mad at himself, and he would ask God, “Help me God. Take this from me. Please make it so I don’t feel this way so I don’t want to pursue this,” but he continued with his behavior.

Using the Relationship with God as a Rationalization or Excuse to Continue or Increase Behavior

The only way to deal with his downward spiral of guilt was to do more sexual acting out to help cope on a momentary basis but then it just continued to make the situation worse.

He knew that he was not acting like a good Christian, and he knew that he was not acting the way that God would want him to act, so he sexually acted out to cope and to deal with his pain.

He knew he was not acting the way his beliefs would have him act, and he felt guilty for betraying the people that put their trust in him. He was fearful and afraid because he had to maintain this lifestyle knowing who he was as a Christian and as an addict. Dealing with that pain and hurt and struggle is what made it worse and one of the reasons that he sought more of it because he needed to seek more in order to cover more of the pain.

Feeling that Marriage Would Solve Problems

S4 thought that once he was married and had a wife, they would have the freedom to engage in sex whenever they wanted, and things would be better.

S4 had a certain expectation of what marriage was and that it would satisfy his sexual needs, and it was a lie and a myth that he would tell himself.

Unrealistic Expectations about Sex

When he thought about sex, he thought, “This is going to be great. This is going to be someone who will meet my needs whenever I want.” He had an unrealistic expectation of what a true intimate relationship was and did not understand true intimacy.

S4 used to think that a relationship was primarily a sexual relationship and that it would satisfy his needs. Right after he got married, he was disappointed about sex with his wife because he felt it was not ever enough.

Initial Trouble in Marriage

He felt inadequate about how to deal with himself, and his wife was dealing with personal issues created from her family upbringing, and so two unprepared, not well adjusted people came together to create a marriage.

After he and his wife got married, he continued to masturbate frequently to pornographic images in magazines that he kept hidden.

His wife grew up as an angry person because she had a father who did not step in to fix things. So she grew up not knowing a loving relationship and the feeling that gave her the most comfort was anger and expressing anger because that made her feel better, to lash out, and that was what occurred in their marriage from the very beginning. She was very explosive.

His needs were primary, and if his needs happened to agree with what his wife wanted then that would be fine, but if not then he did not care because he wanted to masturbate and pursue his addiction however he wanted and he hid it.

Their relationship was problematic to begin with because they both had emotional problems that they brought with them from childhood that prevented them from becoming strong, confident, and stable adults. They were both prone to tempers, outbursts, irrational, and angry behavior.

Ongoing Trouble in Marriage

Marriage was hard and then they had one daughter and then another daughter, it just got harder and harder.

He told her, “Look, I’m done. I’m over it. This marriage is dead.” Something had happened that triggered an argument. They had a bad time and the kids were there, and he just announced to her, “I’m leaving. I can’t put up with this. I just can’t.”

Blaming Spouse

S4 created a lie for why it would be okay for him to leave his wife and children to be with another woman that he was having an affair with. He thought, “Look, this marriage is done, it’s over, it’s been dead for so long. You don’t meet my needs. I don’t meet your needs. None of us is happy. I just want to be happy. Don’t worry, the kids will be fine. They’ll grow up. They’ll be fine. You’ll remarry. Don’t worry,” and he told himself that to make a path of escape for himself because he really wanted to get away from his family and turn his back on them.

Initial Role Confusion about Being a Spiritual Leader

His wife would ask, “How can you as the spiritual leader act this way? What kind of example are you?” and S4 felt the same way because he knew he was supposed to be the spiritual leader of the house.

Using Sexuality or Fantasy as a Way to Cope

He thought that everyone else had the perfect home, perfect parents, perfect siblings, white picket fence, the whole image of perfection that everyone else experienced but him so that drove him inward and he connected with pornographic images. It was to him, the way he could cope.

S4 struggled with feelings of inadequacy and the lack of unconditional love and acceptance and safety that he felt, and that safety came to him through the pursuit of pornographic images, which he would use to masturbate and to give him a sense of relief which helped him to cope with what was a very difficult situation.

Life was not easy and marriage was hard, so his desire for pornography increased because he used pornography to run away from his problems.

Guilt over Sexual Acting Out During Marriage

He knew buying pornographic magazines was wrong, and he knew that it was actual sin.

He knew that he was not acting like a good Christian, and he knew that he was not acting the way that God would want him to act.

The more he acted out, the more guilty and remorseful he felt.

Exposure Causing S to Confess & Try to Change

His friend approached him and said, “There’s a lot of things that I see going on in you that I saw in myself.” S4 did not want to admit that he had a compulsive and addictive

problem, and his friend said, “Yeah, it is, and you need to get help,” so S4 disclosed things to him that he had never disclosed to his wife.

His friend saw the estrangement between S4 and his wife. He came to S4 at the same time as his friend’s wife came to S4’s wife. His friend’s wife told S4’s wife about the struggles they had in their condition and S4’s wife started to ask S4 questions, “Are you seeing anybody? Do you have any pornography?” and it was harder and harder for S4 to lie, so he admitted to his pornography use, and he admitted to his affair.

Through his friend who approached him initially, he started to go to SA groups, but he still was not convinced that he was an addict.

He was away on a business trip when he called the woman he was having an affair with and told her that he could not see her anymore. She sent S4 an e-mail message and said, “Fine. You want to do this? I’m going to call your wife and tell her all these things you’ve been doing that you haven’t told her.” So, S4 called his counselor and admitted all that to him, and his counselor said, “You got to call your wife. She’s got to hear it from you,” and S4 knew that, so he did that. He called her and told her because he was afraid that if he did not, she was going to get this call from the other woman.

Feeling that Sexual Addiction was God’s Will

S4 felt that this was God’s plan for him because God knew that this had to happen to him for him to say, “Okay Lord, I give up. I can’t do it. I just simply cannot control everything. I cannot fix my marriage. I cannot fix all of the things that I’ve done wrong. I’ve got to turn to You. I’ve got to rely on You for everything that I do.”

S4 felt that his addiction was what God intended for him because God knew that these things had to happen to him for him to have a personal realization that he needed to turn his life and will over to the care of God.

S4 feels the struggles in his marriage are what God has for him and what God intends for him and what God wants to use in his life so that S4 can be closer to Him – to look to God for strength and restoration, recovery, reconciliation, surrender. To say to God, “Okay Lord, what you have for me is sufficient, and I’m okay with that.”

Depending on God/Program Daily

S4 has a daily reliance on God whether he is dealing with sexual temptation or problems with his relationship.

He went to SA for about two and a half years and then got more connected with a friend and an accountability group and he attends the accountability groups and continues individual counseling sessions with a Christian counselor. He also prays and reads his Bible every day.

Establishing a Hierarchy in the Marriage

His wife would say, “How could you do this? You professed to be this spiritual leader, and how can I put my trust in you as a spiritual leader now? Even though I know you’ve been in five years of recovery. You’ve been in groups. You speak to others in outreach efforts, but how do I know that you’re not lying to me? How can I trust you as the head of the household?” And they struggle with that, and S4 would say, “Well, I can’t change how you feel, and I understand how you feel, and I know why you’re angry and upset and why you may question this, but this is something that I have to turn to God about because I can’t change how you feel. I can ask God to help you, and I do, but I know that I have to look to Him everyday for my strength and my sobriety, for my life, my relationship, for everything, and I hope that you will see and that God reveals that to you, and if He doesn’t, that’s okay. If you never believe me, I understand that, but I know that I can turn to God and that’s where my trust needs to be instead of pursuing all these other things that I did before.”

Continued Struggles in Marriage

His marriage is still a difficult relationship. His wife still questions his activities. She is fearful, and she does not want it to happen again. She does not want to be fooled. There are a lot of things that have happened that she questions S4 about. She does not believe him even when he says, “No, that’s never happened.”

His wife was doing the laundry and she found a pair of socks that she could not identify. She asked the kids whose socks these were, and they did not know. So she came to S4, accusatory, and she said, “Whose socks are these?” The family could not explain them, and S4 said, “I have never seen those socks before in my life. I don’t wear them. They’re not mine. I have never seen those socks before in my life. I have no idea where those socks came from.” His wife said to him, “Well, how do I know that they’re not from some woman you were with or some man that you were with?” It was very difficult for her to deal with because those were not his socks and no one knew how they got there.

S5 Situated Narrative

Conflicted Childhood

His parents slept in single beds, and he could not understand why. It was strange to him and struck him as something that was unusual for a married couple to do, even as a child.

S5 showed distress when he talked about his parents. He was weepy when he talked about his father and detached when he talked about his mother. With the combination of his family history, he seemed to grow up in a strict Christian home with parents who were not affectionate in front of him.

Disconnection from Mother

S5 felt like he could not talk to his mother about issues he was having. She was very proper, and S5 did not feel she ever wanted to talk to him. She never expressed to him that she wanted to talk to him.

Initial Sexual Exploration & Action

At twelve or thirteen, he was very curious about sex and the feminine body and what the differences were with sex between genders, but he was never educated by his parents about sexual issues. As a result, he tried to find out on his own through pornography.

Using Sex or Relationships as a Way to Feel Affirmed

His sexual behavior became more pronounced as he and his wife grew further apart emotionally. His sexual acting was a relief for him, an avenue he used to fill the emotional void in his marriage.

If he did not feel that he satisfied his wife in every situation or was told that he did not do something right, it would bother him and trigger feelings of low self-esteem. Feeling bad about himself would trigger him to act out in an attempt to make himself feel good about who he was. He would go to a strip club because the dancers were there to make him feel good about himself as a man. They were performing for him and would make him feel good because they acted out his fantasies and created his fantasy world.

Guilt over Sexual Acts Due to Faith

He was more involved in the church in his second marriage, and he had more guilt about his sexual behavior.

Separating Married Life from Sexual Life

Instead of attending the class he went to for work, he would go to a strip club. He kept that a secret, and he started using household money to pay for his sexual behaviors.

He would go to massage parlors and let it go to sexual extremes. He would not engage in sexual intercourse but would engage in oral stimulation and mutual masturbation with the women there.

Separating Religious Life from Sexual Life

He and his wife were still participating at the Episcopal church, and S5's sexual behavior was made him feel guilty, but it did not have enough of an impact on him for him to stop his sexual behavior at that point.

Reaction Formation Parallel

S5 feels that God gave him insight to be a kind of disciple or prophet in the sexual addiction area. S5 grew a desire to witness to other people and say, "Look at me. Look what it did to me. If I can, I want to stop you from doing the same thing." S5 feels his prophetic role is part of his sexual addiction because he should help people. He feels that God is actually using him in the sexual addiction area to work with other people. S5 is involved in the Christian sexual addiction group mostly for that purpose. He understands he has sobriety, and he could probably stop recovery work tomorrow and not act out because he feels he has quite a bit of control now although he still feels that there is an area of his sexual past that he still has not completely conquered.

He started to get involved with prayer and Bible reading and got more involved with choir and more religious activities. That helped him decrease his sexual behaviors.

While he was still sexually acting out, he got involved in church and got elected as a deacon and was very involved with deacon work for some time.

In SA, they have a phone list where you can call friends for support. S5 does not use the phone calls or sponsorship. S5 does not have a sponsor, but he will sponsor somebody. He feels that his sponsor is God, and as long as he can answer to God, he will be okay.

Asking God to Change Him

After he would sexually act out, he'd realize it was wrong and would try to make amends for it. He would try to avoid adult book stores or stay away from pornography, and he would pray to God, "I can't do this. Someone is going to get hurt, so I can't do it."

S5 depends on God through prayer to take away his temptations. If he is sexually tempted, he will tell God, "God, I'm going to do something. Can you stop me? I want to be stopped! Stop me!" And he feels that God stops him from sexually acting out.

Using the Relationship with God as a Rationalization to Continue or Increase Behavior

He would feel remorseful about his sexual behavior. He would think, "Okay, I did it. I'm wrong. Let's not try it again." and when he would act out again, he would think, "Okay, you did it. Okay, so what," and he would ask God for forgiveness. That would help his initial pain over the situation.

S5 always believed that God was a loving God that said, "I created you as a human being that has free will, and I'm here for you. If you mess up or screw up, come to me. Don't be afraid and confess it, and I will forgive you," and he depends on that belief. If he does something wrong, if he swears or commits adultery, he will confess it and knows that he will be forgiven by God because God said He would forgive him. S5 knows that he sins

and could sin again, but by being involved in helping others, he feels that he is clearing himself of the sins that he committed in the past. If he sexually acted out again, he would be able to know how to say, “Okay, God, I’m sorry.”

He’d go to church and then he would go home and would feel good about himself Sunday, maybe Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday because he went to church. He would feel good and then he would get triggered sexually, he would start to sexually fantasize, he would sexually act out in some way, and he would go to church and feel better. He would continue this cycle.

His first marriage was “just there.” S5 was not sure if his marriage was a happy one. It was an existence, and they put up with each other. They did not fight a lot; they just existed. After she got her tubes tied, the sex was absent, and they just participated in the marriage because of the kids.

His current wife and he went through a lot of stressful times; she was diagnosed with breast cancer and they removed lymph glands but the surgeon did not expect her to live because the lymph glands that they removed were so extensive. The cancer moved to her collar bone, but through radiation and chemotherapy, the cancer was gone. This event presented difficult times for the couple.

Using Sexuality or Fantasy as a Way to Cope

His sexual acting out was not a part of his life between the two marriages. It was very minimal at that point. It became more prevalent again after his second wife had her tubes tied and they were not as active sexually; that was when his sexual behaviors started progressing again.

Guilt over Sexual Acting Out During Marriage

As he was more involved with the church, his guilt over his sexual behaviors was more pronounced because he was more aware of doing things wrong and violating God’s rules.

If he had ten dollars, he would spend five dollars on sexual behaviors and could not account for where the other five dollars went. His wife was suspicious and would ask, “What are you doing with it?” That hurt S5 because he did not want to tell her that he used it on sexual acts, but he knew he did, and that bothered him.

Exposure and Potential Consequence Causing S to Confess & Try to Change

As he continued with his sexual behaviors, he started going to adult book stores, and he got into a car accident when he was leaving the adult bookstore. His wife confronted him with his behavior and said, “You have to do something about this. You either have to do it, or you’re out.” He did not want to destroy this marriage like he had his last marriage, so he started looking at how he was going to stop his behavior. He started attending an Every Man’s Battle group, and through that group, he started counseling.

His sexual behavior did not have an impact on his conscience until his divorce and in his second marriage when he realized that he could destroy his second marriage due to his sexual behaviors.

He knew then that he did not want to destroy a second marriage, and the impact of his beliefs about God and his religious background really affected him.

Messages from God

He was walking around the university campus and a voice came to him and said, “Hey, how about it?” So he decided he wanted to give his life to Christ and work with the university fellowship.

He knew then that he did not want to destroy a second marriage, and the impact of God and his religious background really affected him. God grabbed him and said, “Your wife told you to do something. I’m telling you to do something.” That was when he started to seek help.

He could feel God saying, “Look, start getting your act together.” He felt God tapping him on the shoulder and little voices talking to him.

Depending on God/Program Daily

He feels that his sponsor is God, and as long as he can answer to God, he is okay. He believes that God helps him stop his sexual behaviors, so God is his sponsor.

When he would feel upset or when he felt that he was wronged or blamed for something that was not his fault, he would use his sexual behaviors to make himself feel better. Now S5 depends on God to take away his temptations and behaviors, and if God would cease to do that, S5 feels that he would sexually act out. At any point that God would not take away his sexual temptations, S5’s plan would be to “white-knuckle it,” start being strong. He believes the self-control that he can institute within himself with God’s help would be strong enough to stop him from sexually acting out.

S6 Situated Narrative

Conflicted Childhood

S6 was not sure if his parents knew how to treat him. His older brothers were a year apart, and S6 felt like he was the black sheep of the family. They were both very bright, valedictorians of their class two years running, and S6 was the underachiever of the family.

His brothers both went to college and their educations were paid for by his parents. S6 went to college for a while, paying his own way because there was not any more money left.

Disconnection from Father and Mother

His mom was a little tough on him because she had to be. She was a little bit harsh when S6 was younger. She was strict, and S6 only saw his father on the weekends. He worked second shift, so through the week, S6 did not see a lot of him.

Initial Sexual Exploration & Action

He was sexually aware in the second grade and would pursue one little girl in particular, always making sure that he could sit next to her whenever he could especially during reading because then he had the chance to touch her.

He was voyeuristic during grade school at every opportunity because at that time, all the girls wore dresses.

In junior high around Christmas, there was mistletoe everywhere and it became a game to kiss whoever you could whenever you could, and that opened up a whole new world for him. He would go home and think about kissing the girls and would masturbate.

He started dating a girl from church, and they were sexually active just short of intercourse.

In the early part of his senior year of high school, he dated a beautiful young girl who was Ms. Junior Miss. They dated for over a year and were also sexually active.

He went to the army and met a couple of girls there. He was not involved in anything serious but saw them as people to go out with. He stayed in touch with some girls from home. When he came home one time, he called a girl at eleven o'clock at night and said, "Hey, I'm back in town," and he had not talked to her for months, and she was on a date at her apartment. She said, "Well, I got somebody here. Whenever he's gone, I'll put the blind up in the front window, and come on up." That was the way things went for S6, and he did not leave anybody angry or mad, and those behaviors went on for years.

He got out of the army and in his early twenties, and he started having sexual liaisons with married women. If he just stayed away and acted inattentive, they would eventually come to him. Ninety percent of the time, that was the way it worked.

Using Sex or Relationships as a Way to Feel Affirmed

He would become whatever girls needed him to be. If somebody needed a bad boy then he could do that. If somebody needed someone to nurture them, he could do that, and it really became a game that he was very, very good at. He felt like he was a guy and that was what guys did. He did not look at it as a problem. He was envied by other guys.

After being married for some time, he started working in the office, and there was a very beautiful young lady that worked there. He had an affair with her to see if he could do it again. It was not really even a challenge, but he went ahead and had an affair with her. It made him feel good because she was gorgeous, she was married, she was everything he liked about a woman. It got to the point where he was very picky before about who he pursued, and he had been with some beautiful women, and she was in that category.

His long-term affairs with the two women gave him some comfort; they made him feel loved because he did not feel loved by his wife. They were just co-existing.

When he was in high-school, his first true-love girlfriend broke up with him, and it was heart breaking for him. Some things that he did to women in his life later stemmed from his wanting to get even with women because of what happened to him with his first love.

Guilt over Sexual Acts Due to Faith

He would think, “God, what’s wrong with me? Why can’t I beat this?” He would ask God, “Why can’t I stop this?” He never asked God to take his sexual behaviors away because his focus was always about him – Why can’t *I* stop this? Why can’t *I* do this? He would depend on his will-power because he always had been able to do everything on his own.

His faith would conflict with his sexual life only through his guilt. He would feel bad that he sexually acted out again

Preoccupation with Sexual Behavior Resulting in it Becoming a Substantial Part of Life

He was not careful with money. He did not spend thousands of dollars on his addiction, but everything else was secondary in his life. The only thing that was not secondary was his kids.

Everything else in his life for so many years was secondary. When his mind should have been concentrating on finances, he concentrated on his sexual freedom. When he was offered an early retirement, he took it rather than sitting down carefully looking at all the options and the money that he owed. He just jumped at the opportunity because retirement gave him more free time. It was a terrible decision.

Separating Married Life from Sexual Life

He had relationships with two women that were long-time affairs and several that were sporadic, whenever the occasion arose, and his wife never knew he was having affairs. S6 never disclosed his behaviors to her, even after attending Every Man's Battle.

Separating Religious Life from Sexual Life

He left his faith, and it took him a long time to forgive himself and to realize that God forgave him and that S6 was a righteous man. He finally got to the point where he forgave himself and was able to say, "God, here's my life. I can't do anything with this. Give me a hand here. Take it and please do something with it because my fingertips are bloody from trying to crawl out of this hole that I dug for myself."

His faith and his sexual acting out were separate domains. S6 did not allow them to come together or allow his faith to interfere with the other part of his life and help him understand that his faith could be the answer to get him out of his sexual behaviors.

His wife found his pornographic magazines a couple of times, and he would say, "Well, I'll never do that again, I'm sorry," but it did not matter because he just found better places to hide them.

Reaction Formation Parallel

He was an elder in the church in his active addiction. His sexual behaviors did not bother him because he was an elder. It was a separate life. There was no conflict at all for S6.

He always had a tendency to be an organizer in the group, and he always turned out to be the leader in church and in the family.

Using the Relationship with God as a Rationalization to Continue or Increase Behavior

He would feel bad that he sexually acted out again, and he would tell God he was sorry. He would ask for forgiveness and just leave it at that and then move on to the next time he was going to do it again. He felt better temporarily. He would say, "I'm sorry. I won't do that again," until ten days later or three days later or three hours later, he would act out, and again he would say, "I'm sorry. I won't do that again," and then "I'm sorry. I won't do that again," and again and again and again.

Feeling that Marriage Would Solve Problems

He thought, "Ah, I'm married. It's going to be the end of whatever I'm doing here – masturbation and everything else," but it was not.

Unrealistic Expectations about Sex

The fantasy world that he lived in was starting to intrude on the intimacy that he and his wife had in their marriage. Although their sexual relationship was good, but, for S6, it had to be more and more and more. S6 always needed a higher fix. Making love to the same woman for nine years was mundane for him, and that got old and dull. Even when he was with his wife, his mind was somewhere else.

Ongoing Trouble in Marriage

After being out of the house because of his affair, S6 and his wife decided that they needed to get back together, but they did not do anything about trying to fix the damage that had been done. S6 just came home, and there was not much done or said about the past affair. Their sex life was okay for a while. S6 was glad to be back, and, for S6, it was good to try to regain some of that intimacy, but that was not the case for his wife. When they engaged in sex, S6 felt the sex was just okay, but then the sex diminished altogether.

His marital sex life was still present but sporadic, sometimes good, most of the time, not so good, but it was still there up until five years ago, and then it came to a halt.

After their sex life stopped completely, his wife would say to S6, “You don’t want me. I catch you looking at these other women. What’s wrong? You had this affair a long time ago? Why did you do that?” She had many questions, and they were emotionally and sexually distant.

They were growing further and further apart, and the emotional distance and the physical distance was a problem in their relationship. For S6, there was no sexual attraction.

His wife found his pornographic magazines a couple of times, and he would say, “Well, I’ll never do that again, I’m sorry,” but it did not matter because he just found better places to hide them. It was an ongoing problem in their marriage the few times that it happened.

Using Sexuality or Fantasy as a Way to Cope

After the sex started decreasing in his marriage again and conflict arose, S6 turned immediately to sexually acting out like he never had done before, and that was what he did for twenty-five years. He constantly depended on pornography, movies, and fantasy.

Guilt over Sexual Acting Out During Marriage

He never could forgive himself for the mess he caused. It was very hard because he felt like he wrecked his life and his wife’s life even more.

He would think, “You’ve got to stop doing this.”

Exposure Causing S to Confess and Try to Change

The pressure was too much, and he got caught by his wife. He finally got tired of lying and got to the point where he could not remember what lie he told, so he just said, “Yeah. I’m having an affair.”

His wife did not know that he was having ongoing affairs, but she felt something was wrong with him. S6 and his wife developed a habit of listening to the Christian radio station and Steve Arterburn, and they knew that Arterburn was coming to town to do Every Man’s Battle. They read the Every Man’s Battle book and S6 had identified with many things described in the book. S6 going to Every Man’s Battle was a decision that S6 and his wife made. His wife said to him, “You need to go to this or I’m done.”

His wife never found out about his other affairs, but S6 would often talk to his son about his marriage problems over the years. His son was aware that S6 went to Every Man's Battle, and said, "You know, I struggle a little bit with some of that too," and S6 told him about the multiple affairs because he felt he could. He told his son that he had other affairs besides the one that his mom knew about.

Depending on God/Program Daily

S6 attends SA two nights a week and individual counseling.

S6 depends on God to help him with his sexual recovery. If he sees a very attractive lady, S6 says, "Hey, I can't handle this. I'm going to give it to you." He doesn't think he can beat his addiction without his faith.

S6's sobriety became a lifestyle as opposed to the lifestyle he had before. When he sees an attractive woman, he will thank God for creating a beautiful woman, but that is all he will do.

He used to go around and look at a woman again and again, but now instead of following her through the supermarket, he would turn his cart around and go down two aisles and seek out something else and try not to take that second look at her. S6 feels that it is ingrained into his psyche – do not do that, you do not need to do it. He will look away, avert his eyes. Those are the things that he learned in Every Man's Battle and in SA.

If he felt really tempted to sexually act out, he would pray to God, "I can't handle this. I know you can, and nothing else is working. Please give me a hand here. Take this away. I can't do this." One of the other things that got him through a lot of temptations is thinking, "Is it worth it?" S6 will also look at the reality of the situation, combined with prayer. If God does not take away his sexual temptation, he tries to be realistic in his thought process.

Establishing a Hierarchy in the Marriage

After continued arguments between the couple, S6 told his wife, "I'm done tip-toeing around. Maybe that good or maybe that's bad, but that's the way it's going to be." He said, "I'm supposed to still be the head of this household, and that's just the way it's going to be." She really did not say much in response to that, but S6 was adamant, "That's just the way it's going to go," because he felt that he could not give her all the power in the relationship, it gave her too much leeway.

Continued Struggles in Marriage

S6 has not seen either of the women he had long-term affairs with for fifteen years. S6 knew that he could call one of the women and they could have lunch tomorrow, and he would be tempted to have lunch with her because S6 continues to struggle with the relationship he has right now with his wife.

He understands that thinking of getting back with the woman he had an affair with is a fantasy to make himself feel better because he would like to go back to that time when it felt really good, but he feels that the reality of the situation is that he has a relationship to work on with his wife. S6 feels that he and his wife have made strides toward healing and, if it works out, his marriage will be as fulfilling as the affair with the woman was to him. He feels that he needs to focus on repairing his marriage, to be more realistic about what he is doing.

S6 feels that he and his wife are doing better, but he does not feel loved by her. They are still in a very difficult situation because his wife does not understand the addiction, and it is still very personal to her. S6 is not able to tell her, "This was not about you," because he feels like she will not ever believe that.

S6 is a father-figure in his church, and his wife thinks he is a hypocrite because the people at church do not know about his sexual past. At times, she will tell him that they do not know who he really is, but S6 thinks that they do because he does not feel that is who he is today. That was who he was.

His wife has had problems with S6 hugging the girls in church. It has gotten a little better, and she finally said, "I don't like who I've become." She is in counseling with someone also. She says, "I don't like that I'm this screaming bitch." They have grown through some of that, but for a long time she could say just about anything she wanted in an argument, and he had no defense. She would say "Well, you're being defensive. I don't like your attitude. I don't like your tone of voice." S6 was not allowed to be defensive. He had to watch his tone of voice in any discussion, and she got the final say on whether his tone of voice was good or bad.

A couple of months ago they were arguing, and she got very angry again, and S6 said, "I thought this wasn't going to happen again," because this was about a week after she told him that she was not going to be shouting and screaming anymore. He told her, "I'm tired of not being able to just talk to you. You tell me I never talk to you from my heart. I am tired of just sitting here and listening to you and you determining what I was saying and how I'm saying, and so that's done." He said, "I'm going to talk to you, and if you don't like my tone, I'm sorry. If you don't like what I say, I'm sorry. And that's the only time I'm going to say I'm sorry. I've apologized to you ten thousand times, so I'm going to tell you exactly what I'm feeling, and if it sounds defensive then it's going to sound defensive."